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The leading weekly serving the coach industry

November 9, 1989 Issue 562 £1

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1980 Ford R1114 Duple Dominant Express, 53 seats, red moquette, livery white/blue. MoT 1990.

1979 Ford R1114 Duple Dominant Express 53 seats, Bristol dome, grey/blue moq, livery blue.

1979 AEC 760 12 metre Plaxton, 49 reclining seats, autumn tint moquette, Bristol dome, side lockers. Livery cream. Choice of 2.

1978 Bristol VRT (Leyland), 74 str ECW **SOLD**, MoT 11 October 1990.

1978 AEC 760 12 metre Plaxton, 49 reclining seats, autumn tint moquette, Bristol dome, side lockers. Livery cream. Choice of 2.

1977 AEC 760 11m Plaxton, 45 reclining seats, autumn tint moquette, Bristol dome, side lockers, livery cream.

1977 Bedford YMT, 53 seater Caetano, livery cream. Red moquette.

1976 Leyland 53 seater Plaxton Express, semi-auto gearbox, side lockers, Bristol dome, autumn tint moquette, livery cream/maroon. Choice of 2.

1976 Bedford YMT 53 seater Plaxton Express, side lockers, radio, white/red livery, red moquette. MoT 24.04.90.

1976 Bedford PJK Duple Dominant, 29 seats, MoT Dec 89, autumn tint moquette, livery white/green.

2 x 1975 Bristol VRT (Gardner), 75 s **SOLD** ly. MoT April 1990 and Aug 1990.

1975 Bedford YRQ, 45 seater Plaxton, powerdoor, livery blue/yellow, red moquette.

1975 Ford R1114 53 Duple Dominant Express, red moquette, livery white/blue/yellow.

1974 Bedford YRT Duple Dominant, 53 seater, power door, red moquette, livery white.

1972/73/74/75 Leyland Nationals, all MoT'd 1990, ideal contracts vehicles.

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NEOPLAN

1982/3/4 Neoplan Skyliners, 71/72/75 seats, toilet, drinks machine, fridge, radio, PA, Mercedes V10 Engine, 6-speed ZF manual gearbox, some remoquetteed and refurbished.

SCANIA

1986 Berkhof Eclipse dc...
SOLD s, toilet, double glazed windows, Telma, coffee baroon/white. MoT May 1990.

VOLVO

1987 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paramount 3500, 49/53 Recliners, O/S rear continents, 1 door, O/S rear sunken toilet, telma retarder, TV/video, drinks machine, red curtains, choice of two.

1982 Volvo B10M Plaxton Viewmaster, 49 seats, o/c continental door, toilet, drivers bunk, drinks machine, power door, tinted windows, livery white, autumn tint moquette, MoT March 1990.

MINI BUS

1988 Ford Reeve Burgess **SOLD** arbox, power door, radio, dome, boot, MoT July 19

LEYLAND

1981 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant, 53 seats, red moquette, livery white, new MoT.

1981 Leyland Leopard, 11 metre, Plaxton Supreme Express, 53 remoquetteed seats, ZF 6-speed, MoT July 1990.

1981 Leyland Leopard, 12 metre Plaxton Supreme IV, 49 Chapman reclining seats, ZF 6-speed manual gearbox, Bristol dome, destination gear. Livery white, autumn tint moquette. MoT.

MAN

1982 SR 280 46 recliners, Sutrik air conditioning, 6 speed gearbox, o/s centre power door, o/s centre sunken toilet, driver's bunk, fridge, drinks machine, tinted double glazed windows, Rollo blinds, courier seat, Webasto and timer, seat back nets, headrest covers, wheel discs, driver's locker.
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DAF

1989 DAF SB2300 ATI Algarve, 53 reclining seats, continental door, radio PA cassette, curtains, tinted windows, white, orange and black exterior, brown stripe interior, MoT Feb 1990. Choice of 7.

1988 DAF MB230 Plaxton 3500 2 Star, 49/53 reclining seats, courier seat, rear sunken toilet, driver's bunk, drinks machine, continental door, Webasto, Telma, tinted windows, curtains, finished in white, grey and red moquette, MoT Feb 1990. Choice of 6.

1987 DAF SB2300 Caetano Algarve, sunken centre toilet, driver's bunk, radio PA cassette, 49 reclining seats and courier seat, tinted windows, finished in white with grey and red stripe interior, MoT April 1990. Choice of 2.

1986 DAF SB2300 Berkhof Esprit, 53 reclining seats, courier seat, continental door, tinted windows, curtains, MoT April 1990, finished in white, brown stripe interior.

1983 (Y) DAF SB200 Jonckheere Bermuda, 47/51 reclining seats, ducted heating, integral side lockers, power door, wheel discs, toilet, curtains and seat covers, radio/pa/cassette, interior green stripe, exterior white, MoT February 1990.

1983 (Y) DAF MB Plaxton Paramount 3200, 49 reclining seats, 2 side lockers, ducted heating, power door, rear sunken toilet, tv box and wiring for saloon, radio/pa/cassette, interior brown stripe, exterior white, MoT new.

1980 (V) DAF DKL Plaxton Supreme IV, 53 fixed seats, 3 heaters, power door, 2 side lockers, wheel discs, radio/pa/cassette, interior red, exterior white, MoT.

FORD

1983 R1114 Duple Dominant **SOLD**, 53 seats + courier seat, curtains, Telma, radio, power door, beige and white, interior blue. New MoT.

1980 R1114 Plaxton Supreme IV Express, 49 reclining seats, jake brake, side locker, interior brown, exterior cream and maroon. MoT March 1990.

1978 (T) A Series Faro 3, 25 seats, power door, radio cassette, interior red, exterior yellow and red. MoT 23/5/90

SCANIA

1987 (D) Scania K112 CRB Van Hool Alizee H, 49 reclining seats, power door, Telma, crew seat, side lockers, toilet, sink, fridge, blue curtains, radio/pa/cassette, interior blue/red/cream stripe, exterior silver grey, MoT May 1990.

VOLVO



1988 Volvo B10M Plaxton 3500, 53 reclining seats, rear sunken toilet, continental door, courier seat, beige and red interior, exterior white with red and yellow relief. Choice of 3.

1981 (X) Volvo B58 Plaxton Supreme IV, 53 remoquette seats, power door, Telma, side locker, 3 heaters, wheel discs, interior brown chevron, exterior white, MoT December 1989.

1981 (W) Volvo B58 Unicar 11M, 53 seats, ducted heating, side locker, interior grey, exterior white/orange/red/maroon, MoT April 1990.

SCANIA



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1973 (L) Atlantean 680 Northern Counties, 74 seats, interior maroon PVC, exterior blue/yellow, MoT February 1990.

NEOPLAN

1986 Skyliner Mk II, Gardner engine, ZF automatic gearbox, 77 reclining seats, water boiler, fridge, driver's bunk, TV and video, MoT Feb '90, interior red moquette, ext white, blue and orange.

MINIBUSES



1987 Optare City Pacer, automatic transmission, Eberspacher heating, power door, side locker, 25 seats, int red and grey, ext white, new MoT.

1987 Mercedes-Benz 609D Reeve Burgess coach, 19 seats, power door, radio/pa/cassette, int grey, ext white, orange and black, one only, MoT 02/90.

1983 Y Fiat Caetano Beja, 18 seats, power door, luggage boot, int blue, ext white, MoT 23-04-90.

NEOPLAN

1986 Skyliner MkII, Gardner engine, ZF automatic gearbox, 77 reclining seats, water boiler, fridge, drivers bunk, TV and video, MoT Feb '90. Interior red moquette, exterior, white, blue and orange.

AEC

1979 (T) AEC 760 Plaxton Supreme IV, 49 seats, power door, side locker, heater, interior brown/beige stripe, exterior white, MoT March 1990.



BEDFORD

SOLD

1985 (B) YNT Plaxton Paramount, 50 seats, ZF 6 speed gearbox, power door, side lockers, tinted glass, power door, radio/pa/cassette, interior brown and white, exterior white and yellow, MoT April 1990.

1985 (B) YNT Duple Laser, 53 seats, ZF 6 speed gearbox, heated windscreens, side locker, power door, interior blue/grey stripe, exterior white/orange/yellow stripe, MoT April 1990.

1977 (R) Bedford YMT Plaxton Supreme, 53 seats, 3 heaters, radio/pa/cassette, interior red stripe, exterior white/orange/blue, MoT.

LEYLAND



1985 Leyland Tiger Duple Laser II, hydrcyclic fully auto gb, power door, power steering, Webasto, radio/pa, curtains, int blue stripe, ext white, 53 seats, MoT 08.06.90, choice of four.

1985 Leyland Tiger Duple Laser II, power door, ducted heating, side locker, radio/pa/cassette, 51 E-type seats, int beige/red, ext white, MoT 08.11.89.

1984 Leyland Tiger 245 Plaxton Paramount 3200 EXP, semi-auto gb, side lockers, toilet, Webasto, 49, int brown stripe, ext white, MoT 29.01.90.

1984 Leyland Royal Tiger Plaxton Paramount 3500, power door, integral side lockers, heating, drinks machine, toilet, tv/video, radio/pa/cassette, 49 seats, int brown stripe, ext white, MoT 13.02.90. Choice of 2.

1984 Leyland Tiger 245F Berkhof Esprit, underfloor lockers, plug power door, ducted heating, toilet, drinks machine, box for tv, radio/pa/cassette, 49 seats, int brown stripe, ext white, MoT 25.06.90.

1983 Leyland Tiger 245 Plaxton Paramount 3500, power door, side lockers, wheel discs, heated mirror, toilet, tv/video, radio/pa/cassette, 49 seats and courier, int brown stripe, ext white, MoT 28.07.90.

1982 Leyland Leopard ECW EXP, semi-auto gb, destination gear, driver's partition, int autumn tint, ext white, 49 seats, MoT 05.05.90.

1982 Leyland Tiger 218 Plaxton Supreme V Ex, 3 heaters, power door, side locker, radio/pa/cassette, 53 seats, int autumn tint, ext white, MoT 30.10.89.

1982 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant IV, ZF gearbox, power door, SBG dome, 4 heaters, radio/pa/cassette, 53 reclining seats, int blue/grey, ext white/blue, MoT 08.89.

1981 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant II, ZF gb, power door, Telma, side locker, Bristol dome, 3 heaters, radio/pa/cassette, int red/orange, ext white, 53 seats, MoT 18.01.90, choice of two.

1981 Leyland Leopard Plaxton Sup IV, semi-auto gb, manual route gear, power door, Bristol dome, heated windscreens, 53 seats, int yellow/black, ext white, MoT 01.06.90.

1981 Leyland Leopard Plaxton Supreme IV EXP, semi-auto 2 speed gb, heated windscreens, 48 seats, Bristol dome, driver's cab, int autumn tint, ext cream/orange, MoT 25.11.89, choice of 3.

1979 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant II, power door, 4 heaters, radio/pa/cassette, 57 seats, int red/orange, ext white/blue, MoT 01.90.

1978 Leyland Leopard Duple Dominant I, power door, Telma, Bristol dome, Webasto heaters, side locker, 49 seats, int blue stripe, ext white, MoT 12.01.90.

1972 Leyland Leopard Plaxton **SOLD**, power door, autolube, side locker, 2 heater, 40 fixed seats, int autumn tint, ext red/cream, MoT 01.06.90.

Alexander

Coachmart

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FEATURES

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EDITORIAL

Editor - Alan Millar
assistant editor - Trevor Gelken
news editor - Mark Williams
staff writers - Rod Davey, MCIT
Mike Morgan.

ADVERTISING

Group advertisement sales manager - Jan Pepper;
national accounts manager - Nicky Davies;
sales representative - Julie Hancock;
group classified manager - Alison Hare;
classified sales executives - Sue Jones, Paul Murtagh, Richard Greatorex, Sally Wright, Rachel Mutimer;
classified advertisement production - Wyn Harrison;
magazine secretary - Clare Bollans.
Publisher - Ian Griffin

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Subscriptions inquiries -
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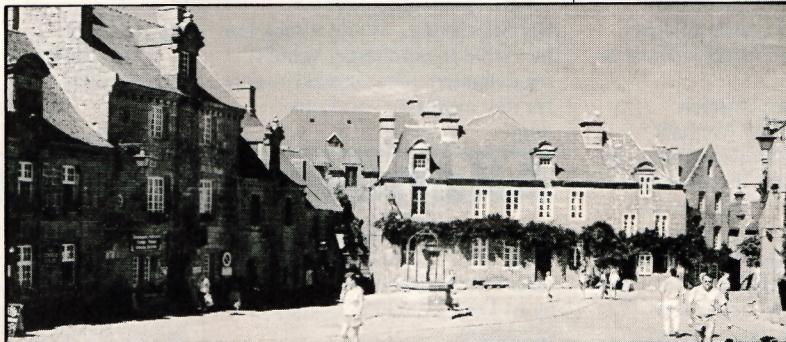
MEMBER OF THE AUDIT
BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS

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Continental runs make for high mileages, so how do coaches stand up to the strain? Mike Morgan checks out Van Hool's Volvo B10M and finds that after 84,000 miles, it's hardly even run in!

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Shock as three firms go

BINGLEY-based Regal Tours has been placed in the hands of the official receiver after a compulsory winding-up order made in late October, while an associated company, Silver Coach International (Leeds) Ltd, has gone into voluntary liquidation.

This is the latest in a line of collapses following a poor year's trading for many tour operators. Last week, the eleventh-hour hopes of a rescue for Glenton International - which went into voluntary liquidation three weeks ago - were dashed when the company ceased trading after a creditors' meeting.

There had been speculation that the goodwill and the Glenton name would be bought before the meeting, addressing its estimated £280,000 debts, but creditors voted to formally place the company in the hands of Terry Carter, of London-based Ernst & Young.

'It's very sad,' former managing director Michael Rutherford told Coachmart as he left his office for the final time. 'Some of the big boys are still interested in the name but the staff have had to find new jobs.'

Rutherford blamed the collapse on excessive investment in incoming tour trade: 'In any normal year, the gamble would have paid off but, since deregulation, we should have realised that our strength lay in the UK,' Rutherford commented.

Regal Tours is believed to have hired all its vehicles, while Silver Coach International (Leeds) is said to be a holding company for Regal. As Coachmart went to press, full details of the firm had not been collated by the official receiver in Leeds, no date had been arranged for a creditors' meeting and firms associated with both Regal and Silver Coach were reluctant to comment.

New first for Yateley



YATELEY Travel has bought its first vehicle - a Reeve Burgess Harrier - after 12 years of coach travel business.

The Swift chassis luxury coach marks a departure for Yateley from total reliance on hired vehicles, and is to be used for continental and UK tour work.

'We sat down and worked out the economics of it all,' said Yateley managing director Brenda Grieve. 'While it may not be viable to purchase a vehicle for extended tours, it makes sense for day excursions and other work.'

The 28-seater coach is equipped with recliners - with seat belts on every seat - coffee machine and fridge. It has a mid-mounted Cummins engine, Telma retarder and tinted glazing.

Grieve said the seat belts came as something of a surprise. 'We hadn't ordered them specifically, but when we viewed the coach at Arlington we were pleased to see them. It's a comfort to some of our passengers.'

The midi-size vehicle is, says Grieve, ideal for the many occasions when tours have undersold.

Allander expands

ALLANDER Travel of Milngavie is expanding the local bus service network operated by its Loch Lomond Coaches subsidiary.

It already has a fleet of 10 buses operated on services in the Vale of Leven towns of Dumbarton and Balloch and is building up to have 11 or 12. A new Reeve Burgess Beaver-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D 33-seater has just been bought and a second reconditioned Leyland Leopard is currently being fitted with a new Willowbrook Warrior body.

Allander MD James Wilson told Coachmart that Loch Lomond has registered plans to start additional services which will link the Vale of Leven with Helensburgh. 'They are with the Traffic Commissioner at present and will probably start

within five weeks,' he said.

The new local bus services will fit in with school contracts won recently by the company, but Wilson also plans to use vehicles from Ministry of Defence contracts in the area to ensure that peak period services are also provided.

'I am a great believer in not coming off services at peaks,' he added.

• Allander has also won a contract to operate one of National Express's Caledonian Express services from Scotland to London.

For the first six months, it will be operated using one of Allander's existing coaches which may be painted into National's colours, but in the longer term Allander may lease a Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M from National Expressliners.

Drummond dies

WALTER Alexander's executive director Alec Drummond has died after retiring earlier this year due to poor health.

Drummond (64), had worked for Alexander for 41 years, and was well-known throughout the coachbuilding industry. He lived at Causewayhead, Stirling, and leaves a wife and three children.

• The sale of the Alexander operation is said to be going ahead as planned, with much industry interest in both the group as a whole and in its component parts, including coachbuilding both at Falkirk and in Northern Ireland.

The labour force at Falkirk has been told it need not worry, and that potential investors would be expecting a continuing return on their outlay. The order book has been swelled within the last fortnight, and the share price seems to have stabilised around £1.35.

We'll teach you a thing or two

STOP! Before you read anything else in this week's Coachmart, spare some time to book one of the remaining places at the 1989 Coachmart Conferences.

For only £29.95 per delegate, you can gain new insights into running a coach business more profitably and more effectively. Learn how to use better financial management to increase your business's profit potential and learn how the image of your business can be developed to win new customers.

The Finance for Profit conferences are being held next week - next Tuesday at the Selfridge Hotel, Oxford Street, London and next Thursday at the Whitwell Hall Country House Hotel. There are still a few places available which you can reserve by phoning Jean Jarvis TODAY on 0733 63100.

Five speakers will spell out strategies for effective financial management, use of management accounts, computers for the coach operator, the arguments for leasing rather than buying, and costing consultancies. With coach industry profits under constant squeeze, can you really afford not to go?

The Image for Increased Sales conferences are being held on November 23 at the St George Hotel, Harrogate and on November 27 at the Kensington Palace Hotel, London.

John King, Wallace Arnold's MD, will speak on improving the image of coach travel; Lada Cars MD Martin Austin will show coach operators how a product can be sold profitably into a low budget market; Jon Cockerill of The Tourism Works will explain the practical points of marketing to the industry; PR expert Lindsay Swan will spell out how to use public relations to sell your services; livery designer Ray Stenning will demonstrate how good design wins custom; and hotel staff trainer Carys Thomas will stress the importance of training all customer facing staff to give the best impression of your business.

Think about it - for £29.95 per delegate per day and two days away from your business, you can learn more than enough to pay back the cost in increased business performance.

Use the special booking form in this issue to be sure of reserving your place today.



EC



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New coaches for Thomas

A BERKSHIRE operator, Peter Thomas Travel of Wokingham, is planning to buy new coaches for National Express contracts it has won recently.

It is operating daily return journeys from London to the south coast and four days a week on services to Blackpool.

It is using a Duple Caribbean-bodied DAF in PTT colours and an all-white Plaxton Paramount 3500-bodied Leyland Tiger initially, but is to acquire new coaches, probably DAFs, for the contracts.

Proprietor Peter Thomas told Coachmart that the contracts involve two few miles to justify leasing Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M Expressliner coaches from National Express.

Pair set for head-on clash with Citylink

COMPETITION for passengers on the Glasgow-Edinburgh route is becoming heated, with Silver Coach Lines and Greens of Kirkintilloch teaming up in a head-on collision with Scottish Citylink.

The two coach firms now have a half-hourly service named Cityline 500, are accepting Citylink's 10-journey tickets in order to recruit passengers, and say they'll have no hesitation in running more vehicles to cover the opposition's timetable if things get fierce.

'We'll wipe the floor with them,' said Silver Coach Lines' managing director Ivan Ford. 'Our coaches are top specification, one even having a toilet and videos,

and the customer reaction is excellent.'

The vehicles are Setras and Volvo Jonckheeres, three from each company, operating from 6.45 am to 6.15 pm. Fare structure is similar but they claim the quality will entice passengers from Citylink.

'They are carrying fresh air at the moment,' countered Alan

Howes of Citylink. 'It's a straw poll, I know, but the 1415 I saw at Glasgow was empty. We're not over-concerned.'

Facing allegations that Citylink had laid on extra vehicles to smother the opposition, Howes claimed the extra vehicles were coincidence, and merely duplicates Citylink often use to cope with demand.

More Scania for KHCT

KINGSTON upon Hull City Transport has ordered eight more East Lancs bodied Scania buses. This is additional to the six similar double deckers featured in Fleet Update.

Bob Irwin, director of engineering, told Coachmart KHCT had broken from its dual-sourcing policy because of the small size of the 1989 orders. Scania N113 chassis with

transverse engines have again been specified. Attempting to maximise capacity the new order will be for 86 seated and 12 standees.

Irwin said: 'We would like to accommodate 100, but are restricted by current axle weight limitations'. KHCT has continued its policy of maximum capacity buses with soft trim, non-slip synthetic rubber flooring and no-smoking policy.

The Scanias run alongside recent deliveries of Dennis Dominators and older Leyland Atlanteans. All Scania engined Metropolitans have now left the fleet. Irwin commented that these MCW built vehicles had significant corrosion problems.

Scania for East Kent



CANTERBURY-based East Kent Road Car Company has bought two Scania buses with Alexander R type double-deck bodies.

This is the first time Scanias

have been used by the bus company, which has 250 vehicles. The vehicles are fitted with acceleration limiters to aid passenger comfort. They have been supplied by Stuart Johnson.

Driver banned

PASSENGERS took the keys from a coach driver who was later found to be five times over the drink-drive limit.

Ian Oxley (39) had taken a party to Skegness from Grantham, in Lincolnshire, and had allegedly been drinking at either Skegness or at a pub stop on the way home.

The drive back had been so frightening that the ignition keys were taken from Oxley, and the passengers 'phoned the firm's boss, James Smith, to ask for another driver.

Oxley, of Great Pointon, admitted driving with excess alcohol and his case was adjourned for reports.



Fond memories



THIRTY years of the M1 motorway and the first motorway express coach service were celebrated by National Express when the company took many of the original Express drivers - including Ernie Hawkins (left) and Don Swain - on a trip down memory lane.

Don, now 82, was the driver of the first Midland Red CM5 coach from London to Birmingham on November 2, 1959, and was pleased to see one of the CM5 vehicles from West Midlands Vintage Vehicle Society there to once again run the route, alongside a modern Rapide Expressliner. That, though was the limit of his interest in the old CM5, and he didn't fancy another stint behind the wheel.

'With a little bit of luck, someone else will do the blooming work!' said Don.

Back in '59, the return fare on the M1 route was 21s 3d (£1.06), while now the same journey will cost upwards of £8.60. With a top speed of 90 mph, the CM5 wasn't slow, and managed the trip in three hours 25 minutes. Now, the journey takes two hours 20 minutes.

For the coaches used, the trip back to Birmingham was going home. The CM5 was built at the Midland Omnibus Company, now the Carlyle works, while the Rapide coach is based at a depot on the Carlyle site. The CM5 was based on the C5, and was one of 2,000 vehicles operated by Midland Red.

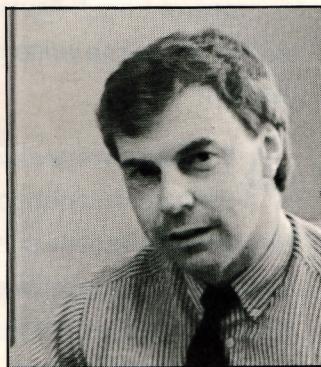
McGrath leaves Hughes DAF

MEL McGrath has relinquished his managing directorship of Hughes DAF to 'pursue personal interests' - according to a statement released by the company.

Bob McLeod, who joined the company from DAF Bus following Hughes DAF's acquisition by the Cowie Group late last year, has been appointed new MD. He told Coachmart: 'Hughes DAF has a bright future ahead of it with competition in the market narrowing down.'

McLeod added the introduction of the DAF SB220 chassis, and DAF's tie up with Optare for its Delta production, would create a significant increase in overall DAF sales. However, some of this increased production is being sold direct to operators from Optare.

It is understood Mel McGrath has left the bus and coach industry



and has moved into the commercial property market. Hughes DAF's owner before the Cowie takeover, Paul Sykes, is also involved with property development.

His company, Paul Sykes Developments, has a large stake in the giant shopping development on the ex-Tinsley steelworks site in Sheffield.

THE

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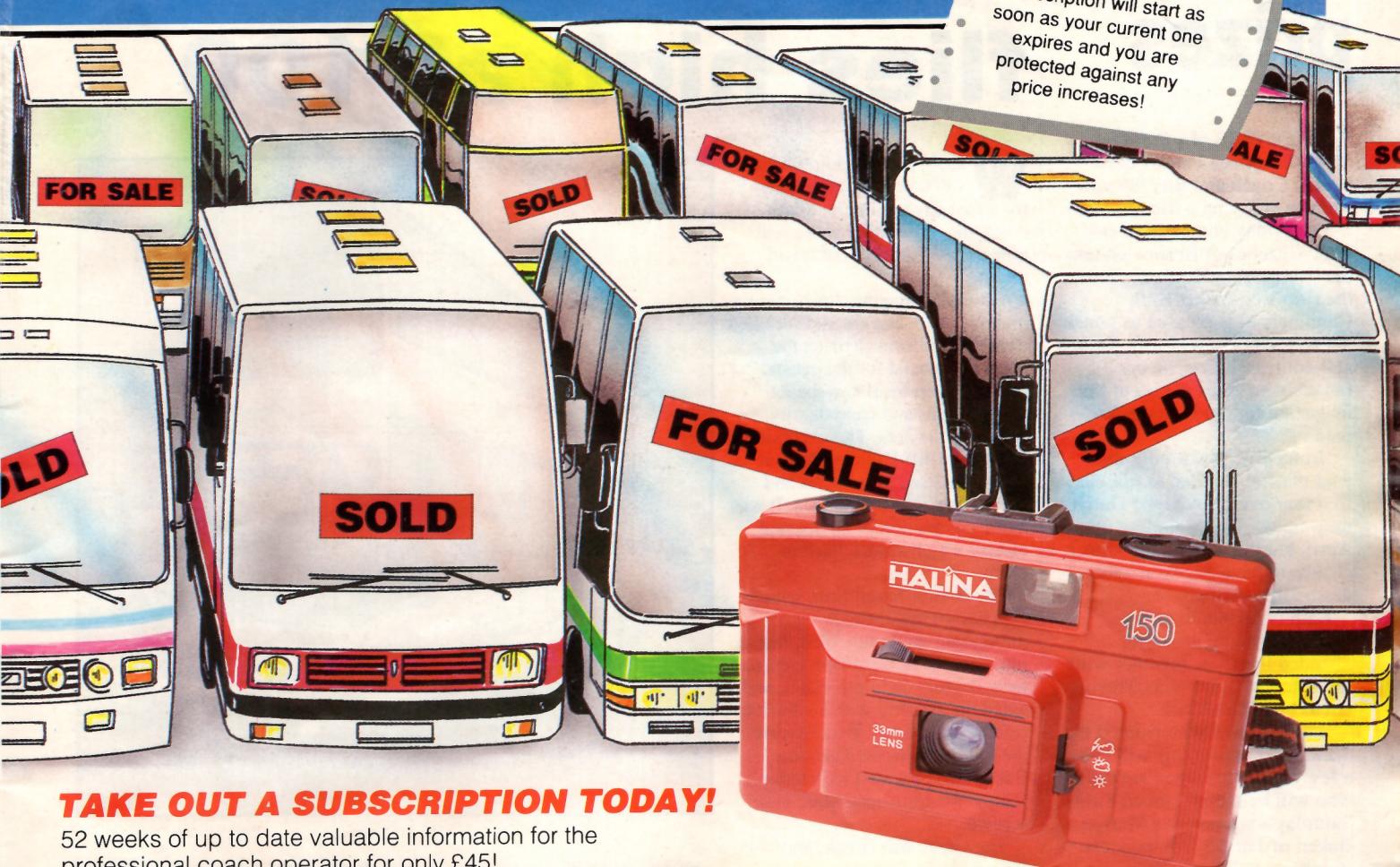
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Holiday prizes

Bakers Dolphin flies high at 100

WINNERS of a P & O European Ferries draw held at Coach and Bus '89 will soon be enjoying a trip abroad.

The Friday competition saw TNC Coaches of Bromwich take the two-passenger prize... and the firm's co-owner Kath Cunningham is pleased as punch. 'This is super news,' said Kath, a self-confessed *Coachmart* fanatic who takes copies of the magazine for her bedtime reading.

'Ironically, it was only this year that we decided to run our first tour overseas, to the Dutch tulip fields. That's coming up in April, but this win will give us a chance to have a look at another destination, perhaps.'

Kath is partnered in her business by son Neil, who attended the show together with his wife Pat and drivers Trevor Gibbs and John Clark.

'I don't know who entered the draw, but I expect this will cause a few arguments when we decide who will be going!' joked Kath. Saturday's winner was Martyn Baker, of J and S Components, Rainham, in Essex, while Sunday saw Vincent Lewis, of Earlsway Coaches, Bolton, Lancashire, take the prize.

WHEN Bakers Dolphin took 1,000 of their customers for a free day out on the South coast, the celebration was a real milestone - 100 years of travel trading.

Bakers' managing director cut a massive cake, and the staff dressed in period uniform to make the occasion special for the guests, plucked from local newspaper competitions and from charity homes in the area. The excursion to Devon Cliff Holiday Park, at Exmouth, used 22 coaches and culminated in afternoon tea. It was a rare celebration of an unusual history which started back in 1889.

The Bristol-based firm, which also has 40 travel shops throughout the South West, began life using its horse-drawn cabs to ferry doctors on house call... and aided the afterlife with a valuable sideline in hearse. Ever diverse, the founder Charles Theodore Baker also provided a Cheddar Valley-Weston-super-Mare mail service.

The Great War struck, and Bakers' horses were commandeered for work drawing artillery. At the war's end, Bakers could offer its first motorised



hearses and taxis, and by the 1920s was running its first charabanc. Seven years later, the firm became Charles T. Baker and

Bakers Dolphin - now one of the most successful companies in the west country.

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FREIGHT ROVER, diesel, 5-speed, 16 high back moquette seats, high roof, radio/cassette, 4 speakers, full soft trim, luggage racks, saloon heater, quad vent, tinted windows. £15,950.

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1986 (C) 307D 12 MOQ SEATS, high spec throughout, annual March 1990. £10,250.

1982 (Y) TRANSIT 16 SEATER, 1 year's annual. £5,350.

1982 (X) TRANSIT PETROL, 12 seater, all tidy. £3,250.

1984 (A) FIAT PETROL, 12 seater, annual June 1989, very clean vehicle. £3,950.

1988 (E) TRANSIT DIESEL, 12 seater, high spec, 1 year's annual. £10,750.

1980 (V) 16 SEATER TRANSIT, petrol, annual February 90. £3,500.

1976 (P) TRANSIT PETROL, welfare dormobile. £950.

1977 TRANSIT DORMOBILE DIESEL, 16 seats, annual December 1989. £1,450

1985 (B) FORD R1014 DIESEL

Wadham Stringer on shortened chassis, 33 + 14 standing, power door, full service bus spec, annual June '90. £13,950.

1984 (B) TRANSIT DIESEL, overdrive, 16 high back moquette seats, high spec, annual Feb. £8,250.

1983 (A) CAETANO BEJA, 18 seater, power door, annual April 1990.

1983 (Y) MERCEDES 508D, 19 high back moquette seats, Bristol dome, boot, annual Dec '89. £10,950.

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1983 (Y) TRANSIT, 16 seater, petrol, full soft trim, luggage racks, annual April '90. £4,950.

MERCEDES 508 D, 27 seats, coachbuilt body, power door, boot. 1 year's class 5 MoT. Best offer secures.

1985 (B) TRANSIT DIESEL, 12 moquette seats, 1 year's annual, very tidy throughout £6,250.

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From small acorns...

Son when John Nowell Baker took a partnership.

The next war arrived, and Bakers contracted its coaches to British Empire Airways, now BOAC, and continued this work until 1945. That was the year in which Bakers began running day trips from Weston-super-Mare in

its 19 vehicles.

Charles Baker died in 1952, and Eva Baker - his daughter in law - took her place as partner alongside her husband. The company absorbed two more coach firms, and John Baker's children all became shareholders.

In 1962, Bakers opened its first

World travel shop in Weston-super-Mare, then another two in 1970 - the year in which Bakers sold off its funeral business. The company grew unrelentingly until 1984, when the purchase of Dolphin Travel of Bristol saw the name change to Bakers Dolphin.

Now, Bakers runs 66 coaches, and is recognised as one of the most successful travel companies in the West Country, offering

tours, excursions and express travel throughout Britain and Europe.

'I suppose it's in our blood,' said current managing director John Baker. 'A hundred years down the line we are still running coaches. We are still expanding.'

Has he any complaints? 'We make a living,' said Baker, 'But I still think prices are much too low...'



A Bakers charabanc trip dated 1920.

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- * Hinged driver's door fitted with sliding window and driver's wardrobe. Heated rear view external mirrors. Blaupunkt stereo radio cassette player, with two microphones and 27 loudspeakers. Ducted thermostatically controlled underfloor saloon heaters, Webasto water heater with digital timer control. Plug type power entrance door with peage window. Split laminate front windscreens. Body insulation to roof, sides and floor. Maximum luggage storage compartment fully illuminated. Two fog lamps front and rear together with rear reversing lights. Stainless steel wheel trims. Extra direction indicators on body sides.
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FLEET UPDATE



Right royal occasion

Seen at the handover of this Wright-bodied Iveco Ford are Sam Sinnaman (Wright's sales executive), John Cornelius (manager of Crosfield House), and Wyn Griffiths (Crosfield House).

Crosfield House is a country home owned by the Royal British Legion in Powys, Wales. Equipped with Montreal lift, tables and 32 seats the coach will be used to transport residents of the home.

The Consort TT body is fitted on a 4417mm wheelbase Iveco 79.14 chassis.



Talbots made to measure

Photographed outside the Made to Measure factory in Stockport are two Talbot Express 14 seater coaches.

Nearest the camera is the fourth similar vehicle to be supplied to Arthur Taylor of Orford near Warrington. The new coach has joined the small fleet on specialised small group executive travel.

Diplomatic Beaver

Diplomatic plates identify this Reeve Burgess Beaver as being slightly unusual.

Built on Mercedes 811 chassis, the 29 seat coach has been supplied to the Embassy of the German Democratic Republic in London. It is to be used on Embassy business throughout the UK after being supplied by dealers Mercedes-Benz (UK) Ltd, London.

The body specification includes folding armrests, seat belts, full soft trim including carpeted saloon floor. Tinted glass is fitted to the side windows, and the passenger entrance door is electrically operated.

To allow extra space for carrying luggage, the boot was enlarged.



FLEET UPDATE

Barfordian Bova bevy



◀ This is the second Bova to be delivered to Barfordian Coaches Ltd within a few months. Although newcomers to Bova, the Bedfordshire operator returned to Moseley for a Futura FHD of identical specification.

The 12 metre integral coach joins the 14 vehicle fleet, which is now 50 per cent DAF engined.

Equipped with 51 seats, centre sunken toilet, servery, TV, Webasto and driver's bunk, the coach will operate on Barfordian's own European tour programme to destinations in Italy, Switzerland, Austria and West Germany. Future tours into Eastern Europe are

Patriotic Elizabethans



▲ Finished in a livery of red/white/blue is this pair of coaches recently supplied by Yeates to Elizabethan Travel.

The two 12 metre Dennis Javelins are bodied by Plaxton. 53 reclining seats are fitted in the Paramount 3200 bodywork, which features full soft trim and radio/PA/cassette.

Elizabethan is based at Bloxwich in the West Midlands.

Brewers go for DAFs

▼ United Welsh Group member, AE & FR Brewer Ltd has recently taken delivery of four DAFs supplied by Hughes DAF.

Pictured is one with MB 230 LB chassis and Plaxton 3500 two star coachwork. It is fitted with 51 reclining seats and toilet.

In common with the other three coaches, the Brewer colour scheme was applied by Hughes at its Cleckheaton headquarters.



Scania's super six

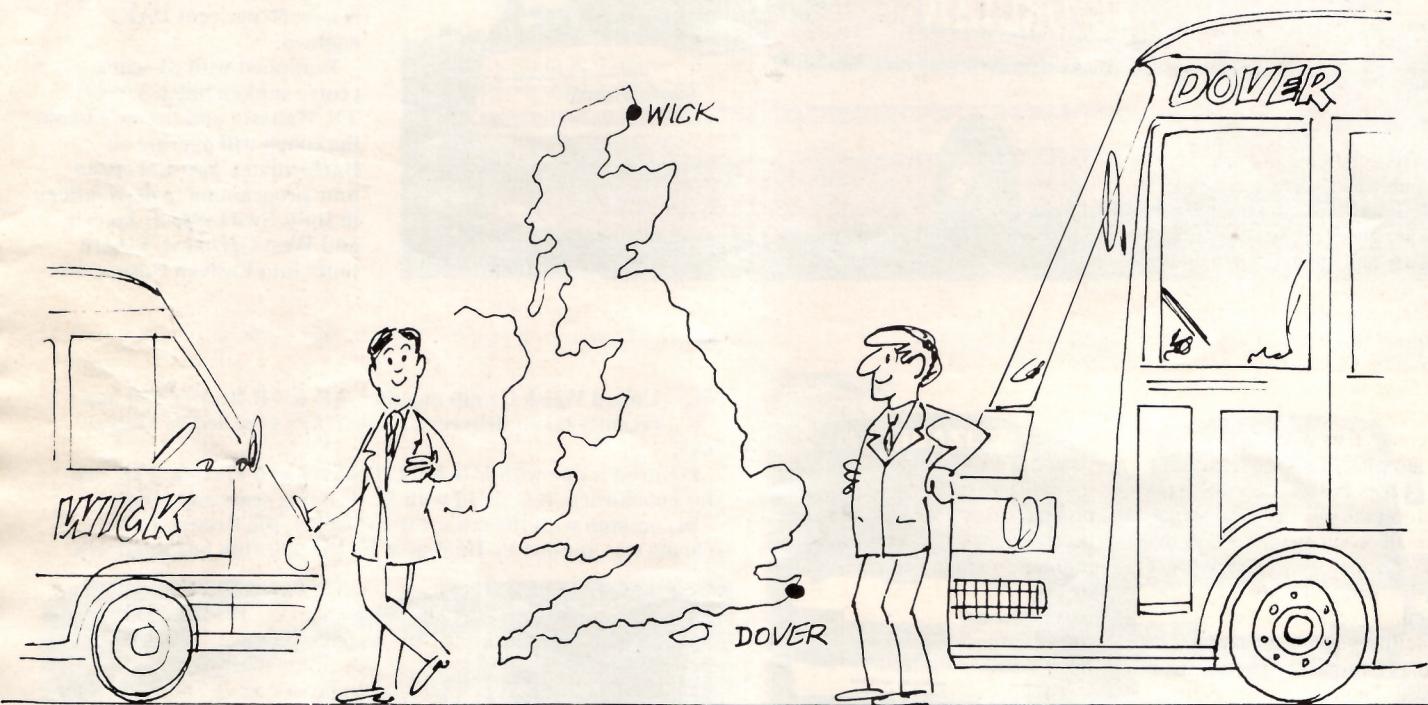
Pictured alongside Hull Marina is one of Kingston upon Hull City Transport's six new Scania double deckers.

At 10.5 metres these East Lancs bodied 88 seaters are larger than previous Hull 'deckers'. They follow experience with a small batch of Scania/East Lancs single deck 'City Slicker' vehicles, and although to bus specification the interior features soft trim and KHCT moquette.

The bodywork is of interest with the Alexander style front end styling to match existing Alexander and East Lancs



FROM A MINI-BUS IN WICK



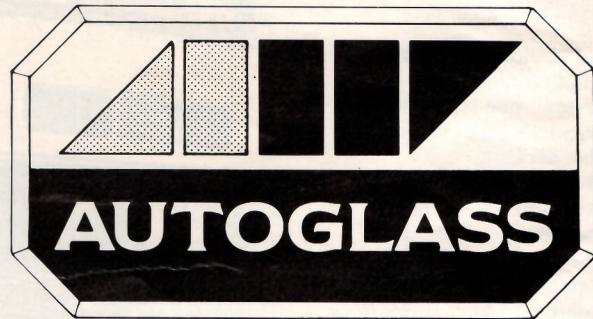
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M331



LET'S KEEP OUR ENGLISH EASY

IT is apparent to me from published readers' letters that while I may have some critics, they are generally from outside the industry and letters from operators broadly support views I express.

That seems fine, for my aim is to mirror the views of we operators, while fully accepting that there will be contrary opinions expressed when seen from a different viewpoint.

I have heard it suggested that sometimes I use words which may not form the everyday vocabulary of small coach operators. For that I make no apology - I simply use the word which best conveys the meaning I seek to impart.

Mellifluous is the word that springs to mind in responding to Charles Dunbar's quaint point about my use of the nominative pronoun (*we*) rather than the objective (*us*) when the pronoun is used as an object.

As that may be a whole sentence which is beyond the

comprehension of many, let me put it in simpler terms: Charles thinks I should not write (as I often do) 'we operators'. He says it should be 'us operators'. Whatever may be the rights and wrongs of the use of case in grammar, 'us operators' grates on my ear. It is not mellifluous and I will continue, as in the previous paragraph to write 'we operators'.

English is spoken by 300 million people around the globe. Although it does have some anomalies in pronunciation, it is easy to learn because it has escaped from the tortuous grammatical constructions of its history. In the long distant past English had different case forms for nouns, probably inherited from Latin.

They are now, happily, as dead as that language - although still horribly present in tongue twisting German. In Latin too the verb at the end of the sentence was put! No wonder it's a dead language, but it was actually worse than that

example for words in that language (as well as in Greek) also had to match for mood.

Who but the French could have, and stick with, a language which requires the speaker to accredit inanimate nouns with either masculine or feminine genders?

So, my personal campaign for the unified Europe is to Keep English Easy in the hope that they will change to our tongue rather than the other way round.

Our language has survived because it is adaptable and flexible and if splitting infinitives and ignoring outmoded case styles makes it more mellifluous - and thus more likely to be adopted by our neighbours - that seems to me wholly laudable.

Actually, if Charles Dunbar has ceased to criticise my support of the principle of deregulation and is only left with my use of grammar at which to tilt, things must be getting better!

What a load of penny pinchers

IF the 'Palmer' review of the role of traffic commissioners and traffic areas is implemented (which it may never be, for the libraries of both Houses of Parliament are stacked with similar reports which never became legislation), we will retain the traffic commissioners.

They may well be a bit thinner on the ground and subject to a supreme commander. For John Palmer has recognised a point which I and others have made. He says: "There is widespread and justified complaint about the lack of consistency between commissioners." The proposal for an 'overlord' commissioner is seen as the solution to this problem.

While, broadly - but with one exception - I cannot disagree with any of the conclusions, even though in some ways they are not as radical as I would have wished, it does seem to be a miserable little penny pinching exercise.

The present costs of the areas examined is about £16 million p.a. The proposed savings might be £652,000 p.a. But it is unclear whether this takes into account the proposed recruitment of people to monitor proper operation of local bus services and certainly does not make allowance for the cost to the industry of having less, and thus more distant, traffic area offices.

The cost of conducting the review to effect this niggardly saving is stated to have been £34,900. That is about the current salary of a traffic commissioner.

It is therefore rather surprising that one of the recommendations is that: "A serious effort should be made to improve the content and presentation of the traffic commissioners' annual reports". One might have expected that people on that sort of salary could submit an acceptable style and standard of report without the headmaster having to write, 'Could do better'!



We've never had it so good

Is it really 30 years since I stood on a new motorway bridge and looked at that novelty, the 72 mile London to Birmingham motorway? We have come a long way since November 1959.

Before then we envied Germany with 2,000 miles of autobahn and the Italian 1,875 miles of autostrada. Although we moan about roadworks and deplore the restitutions works of hole diggers, we do really now have a good network and standard of highways in this country.

Although there are still more improvements needed - and yes I know all about the problems of the M25 - overall we have caught up with, and perhaps overtaken, the rest of Europe in the standards of our roads and motorways.

The avoidance of through traffic in towns and city centres has speeded up travel and brought a significant drop in road deaths. Even before the last war - with only a fraction of today's vehicles on the roads - 6,000 people a year died in traffic accidents. Today that figure has reduced to 5,000.

It is just a pity that all of the taxation from vehicle excise duty to fuel tax is not applied to highway repair and replacement. As well as having better and safer roads we could have gold plated marker posts by the side of all motorways!

Speaking of vehicle excise duty, the 14 'days of grace' to renew a vehicle disc are just that - days of grace. They are not a statutory right, simply a convention that prosecutions will not be mounted

against private motorists who are not in strict compliance with the legal requirement to have and display a valid disc at all times a vehicle is on the road.

Hauliers have long been prosecuted for not renewing punctually. The increased PSV rates now make prosecution of we operators more likely. I would have hoped that, in recognition of the size and severity of the Budget increases in VED the Department of Transport might have liaised with the police to allow a phasing in to the strict application of the law to cushion the bad effect of this 300 per cent increase on cash flows.

That may have happened, but don't bank on it. I have had a friendly warning from a local bobby.

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Pointe du Raz is the most westerly point of the region and is Brittany's 'Land's End'.

ACROSS the modest Monts D'Arrée, one can – with surprising ease – take a scenic cross-country route from the Côtes du Nord to the westerly Finistère.

Although marked as minor roads on the Michelin map, my route should not prove difficult for a coach. In general, I found the roads excellent, although signposting can often be a little confusing.

Travelling from the town of Morlaix, on the Brest-Rennes Autoroute, an attractive way to reach the ancient township of Locronan is via Plougonven, Huelgoat and Pleyben.

The town of Morlaix, in a deep narrow estuary, used to rival the ports of St Malo and Nantes – and was the most important in lower Brittany during the eighteenth century. In its prime, the French East India Company provided its major source of employment. But the old vessels used at the time, such as the feluccas, caracks and nefes, have now been replaced by pleasure craft.

Morlaix has interesting wooden houses lining the older streets, with slate shingles or embellished with statuettes. A foot tour may be organised walking by the old boutiques in the Grand Rue, and there is a museum containing examples of French, Dutch and Italian art.

POINTS WEST IN BRITTANY

Rod Davey continues his fact-finding tour of Brittany with some tourism ideas for British coach operators.

The town is said to be extremely lively on market days, although the market was not being held while I was there.

Passing through sleepy Ploucronven, one of the very first Breton communities, takes you to Huelgoat. Incidentally, this area, known as Leon, contains a typical selection of Breton churches with fine examples of local craftsmanship.

A round trip from Morlaix may take in Pleyber-Christ; the partially rebuilt Romanesque

and Gothic-style church, previously part of a Cistercian abbey, at Le Relece; and Plounéour Meneg. Heading west along the D764, the church at Commana has a fine example of 'Rustic Baroque' church architecture with a particularly elaborate altar.

Slightly off route on the D35, La Martyre church is an example of the Breton Renaissance style and the church at nearby Pencran has a collection of highly expressive sculptures.

Driving through Landerneau, north east along the D712, is a rustic church in la Roche-Maurice near the ruins of an old chateau; the church of Lampaul Guimiliau is the most elaborately decorated in Brittany, reached via Landivisiau on the D11; and Guimiliau, on the D11 has a large seventeenth century church with fine examples of carved furniture and a few hundred small statues.

Morlaix may be returned to via the D31 to St Thegonnec, which joins the N12. St Thegonnec church, built between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, contains further examples of the Breton Renaissance-style architecture.

West of the Leon area, Locronan is a magnificent, although small, tourist town,

Hotels

Inter-France Reservations will book group accommodation in many hotels in the region. As mentioned in part one, it has two large hotels in Morlaix – the Hotel Europe and Hotel Fontaine. There is an excellent overnight stop, which may well be the highlight of any Brittany tour, in Locronan at the 35 room Hotel Au Fer de Cheval

on the Route du Blois de Nevet. Other hotels bookable through this agency include the Hotel Moderne in the Avenue de la Gare in Quimper with 60 rooms and the Hotel Auroi Gradlon, with 36 rooms at Audierne between Quimper and Brest.

Inter-France can be contacted on 01-450-9388.

with interesting granite buildings and many small restaurants, souvenir shops, bars and picture galleries. Containing a picturesque square, dominated by a historic church dedicated to St Ronan, the town has a 35-room hotel, the two-star Fer a Cheval – and is ideal for an overnight stop (tel: 98-91-70-67).

A good route to Locronan, from Morlaix and the Leon area, is from Plougonven and Huelgoat, via Pleyben and Chateoulin, on the river Aulne, which is famous for salmon fishing.

Thriving

With Renaissance houses dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Locronan was the centre of a thriving weaving and textile trade. Sixteenth century records from Bristol, Devon and Cornwall, show the town's 'poldavis' hemp-fibre cloth was part of a healthy trade between Brittany and England.

In fact, Locronan, despite

intense competition from Merdignac and Vitre, was the main supplier of sailcloth to the British navy. And ironically, the town also supplied the sails for the Spanish Armada.

However, the weaving trade was hit by the construction of the 'royal mills' in Rennes, before the French revolution, by the absolutist state in the early eighteenth century. And by the end of the nineteenth century the age of steel meant that the sailcloth trade had all but disappeared.

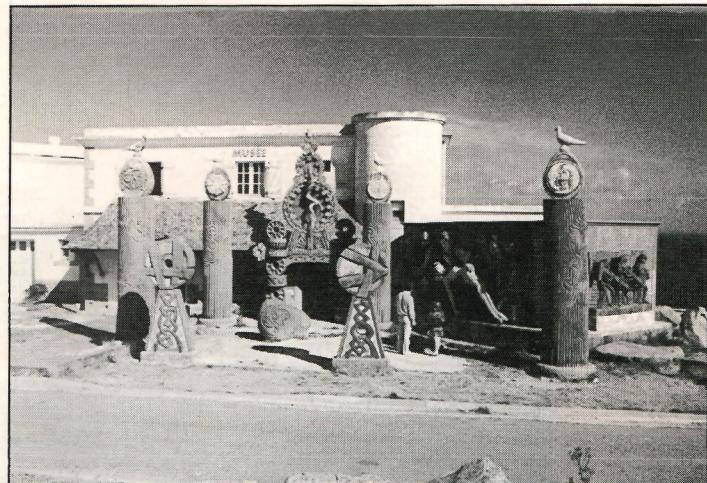
Myths and legends surrounding St Ronan make Locronan an ideal staging post for the coach tourist. Ronan was an Irishman who brought Christianity to the area, which had allegedly been a centre for Celtic pagan rites in the Holy Nevet wood.

A Christian procession, the Tromenie, now follows the route of the old pagan procession to the Montagne de Locronan on the second Sunday in July. The sacred stones of the Celts have now been replaced by crosses en route.

Ronan is said to have arrived at the time of the Viking



Locronan, with its small cafes and restaurants, has many interesting vistas as one walks through this granite township.



The museum at Pointe du Raz has a museum with an intricately carved facade.

invasions in the ninth century – and a local inhabitant, who helped him build his first hut, was converted by him to Christianity according to a thirteenth century Latin manuscript. However, because Ronan's prayers warded off the Devil, the legend reads, Lucifer instilled a sense of 'petulant discontent' in the inhabitant's wife, who became known as Keban the Shrew.

According to the legend, Keban locked her daughter in a chest and blamed the child's disappearance on Ronan. And when the child choked to death on a crust of bread Keban had Ronan dragged before the pagan king Grallon.

The poor saint had two rabid dogs set on to him, but he pacified them with the sign of the cross. Although the man went on to revive Keban's daughter, the woman accused him of rape and he finally left the area.

Luck

He did not seem to have much luck afterwards, either, as when he died in Hillion, near St Brieuc, a grasping peasant cut off one of his arms to have first shout for the saint's relics.

The peasant gave up the whole body when his own arm was threatened – with its ownership contested by the Counts of Vannes, Rennes and Cornouaille. However, the story has it the body was driven without human direction by an ox-cart back to his hermitage in Locronan – with the shrew Keban engulfed by the fires of

Hell. The ideological battle between Christianity and paganism was now, no doubt, complete – game, set and match.

The whole story of Ronan is set out in a 'cartoon strip' on the pulpit of Locronan church, crafted in 1707 by Louis Bariou. The church itself is fifteenth century Gothic, and contains an image of Ronan, dressed incongruously as a Lord Bishop,

Mealstop

carved in granite and colourfully painted.

When leaving Locronan, an ideal destination and suitable mealstop, with excellent coach parking, can be found on the most westerly point of Brittany. Pointe du Raz is Brittany's 'Land's End', and features a museum with an intricately carved facade.

The view out to sea, which is five minutes walk from the coach park, is magnificent. An obligatory statue of Notre Dame is accompanied by the coast guard station.

Near the coach park, which charges FF8.50 (85p), is a shopping mall bristling with souvenir shops and small restaurant-bars. Menus in the restaurants start at FF50 (£5) although group rates may be negotiable.

In the next installment, I head south and visit the seaside towns of Benodet, Concarneau, the port of Lorient, see the megaliths of Carnac, and stay at the fashionable resort of La Baule, near the mouth of the Loire.

TOURISM

New hotel

COUNTY Durham is to get a 100-room hotel centred on the 17th century Redworth Hall, at Newton Aycliffe.

The original building's 17 bedrooms are to be supplemented by two extensions, and a leisure complex and swimming pool by October 1990.

Owners Tomorrow's Leisure, operating as Norstead Leisure, are hoping for 20 percent overseas guests. Redworth Hall Hotel is on 0388 772442.

Lancs grants

GRANTS of up to £250 are available for coach operators planning a programme of tours or excursions to Lancaster.

Details of the new grants - to be used for promotion, etc - are available from David Wright, Tel: 0524 841 249.

Panto fun

THE Fortune Theatre offers an alternative to panto during the Christmas period, with Father

Christmas and the Lost Toys - a play ideal for family excursions. Tickets are priced between £4 and £8.50, and details are from the Fortune Theatre, near Covent Garden, on 01 240 1514.

Be patient

ONSORT Hotel group is biting its lip over its Christmas trade... which has so far not materialised.

The group says bookings are slow, and expects a last-minute rush for its package deals. It is warning its hoteliers not to cancel Christmas arrangements but to be patient.

Phone service

ONDON Tourist Board has launched a new telephone booking service for a range of accommodation in the City.

Bed and breakfast through to top London hotels are available at a booking charge of £4.50 plus a deposit, and accommodation owners are being charged 10 percent commission.

Phone the LTB, quoting your Access/Visa number, on 01 824 8844, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm.

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VAN HOOL VOLVO - THE MILLION MILE MARVEL

ARRIVING in Weardale on a cold bleak October morning is sufficient experience to encourage the misconception regarding the impoverished existence of those living in the 'far north'. However, this illusion was soon dispelled when I met the staff and vehicles of Ellerby's Coaches, Wolsingham.

Ellerby's had recently moved down from Tow Law to the relative shelter of a former wood mill. Parked in the yard was a cross-section of the Ellerby fleet - including its latest pride and joy, a nine-month-old Volvo B10M Mark III with EGS. After 135,117 km (83,961 miles) Peter Ellerby considered the 'new' coach sufficiently 'run-in' to provide an interesting subject for this *Coachmart* road test.

Former rally driver Peter Ellerby is partner with his father Leslie in the company established in 1975 to plug a gap in the local coaching market. Ellerby's soon spotted the potential offered by the expanding shuttle/tour market and by 1984

High mileage work demands high quality coaches - that's why Ellerby's Travel chose the Van Hool Alizee Volvo B10M. Staff writer Mike Morgan tested the model and found that after 84,000 miles it was hardly even run in.

had bought its first new coach with rear sunken lounge for this market. Satisfaction with this Volvo/Van Hool combination encouraged Ellerby's to return to the same source.

Enthusiasm

It was clear that both owners and staff had considerable enthusiasm for the company's style of operation in general, and the test coach in particular. Once ordered through Moseley's, the Ellerby family made a number of visits to the Van Hool factory.

Driver Ken Tague was included on one of these trips. Tague subsequently took charge of F63 VEF and immediately embarked on an intensive programme of 10 day tours to Austria interspersed with three-day shuttles to Yugoslavia.

All of this work was for Siesta Holidays, an organisation with whom Ellerby's has established a close relationship following the collapse of Hull-based Shelmar in September 1984.



With angled instrument panel most controls are ideally positioned. The beaded seat cover proved to be very acceptable over a long journey.

ROAD TEST

The nature of long-distance holiday work and experience with existing vehicles in the fleet contributed to the carefully chosen specification of the test Volvo. In addition to its first new coach (now having covered 1,250,000 miles), Ellerby's has a secondhand Volvo/Van Hool Alizee of the same vintage. The detail of the test coach closely mirrors this latter vehicle.

Bodywork

The Van Hool Alizee Super High to Temp 100 specification will be familiar to most readers. It has an established reputation on the UK market, being a jig-built product of the Koningshooikt factory in Belgium. The body sides feature full-length stretched aluminium waistpanel and aluminium panels below that level.

Front and rear panels are in GRP. Side windows are bonded, but front and rear are gasket mounted. On the test vehicle the side windows were Parsol tinted single glazed complemented by full-drawer curtains.

Peter Ellerby told me double glazing had not been specified in an attempt to save weight. In common with other British operators, weight had become an important consideration following tighter interpretation of the regulations.

During the test, I was unaware of any disadvantage resulting from this economy, but Ellerby commented that passengers in his double-glazed vehicles did benefit from the improved insulation qualities. He said: 'It's a feature that you only miss once you've experienced it'.

Sensibly the full soft trim interior had been designed for

Data File

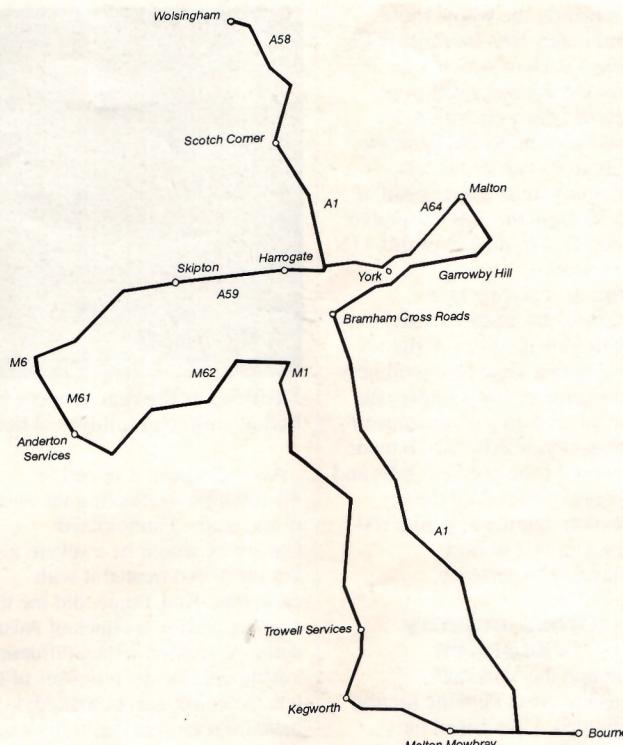
Chassis Type Volvo B10M
GLE Mark III
Bodywork Van Hool Alizee-SH

Dimensions

Length 12 metres
 Width 2.5 metres
 Height 3.6 metres
 Unladen Weight 12590 kg
 Gross Vehicle Weight 18000 kg

Mechanical Specification

Engine Volvo THD 102 KD
Power 340 BHP (250 KW) at 2200 rpm
Capacity 11.6 litres
Torque 1400 Lbf ft (143 Nm) at 1250 rpm
Gearbox 7 speed Volvo EGS
Exhaust Brake foot pedal operated
Retarder Telma operated by footbrake and dash mounted lever.
Steering ball and nut type power with integrated servo.
Suspension full air



The two day test route consists of four sections: Wolsingham to A59, Bramham Cross Roads to Anderton Services, Anderton to Trowell, and Trowell to Bramham. An overnight stop was made in Bourne.

long life. Brown cord carpet material covered the racks and side casings, whereas the moquette covered roof centre panel matched the seating. Hard wearing doormats were situated in the 80cm continental doorway and a removable ribmat carpet covered the steps and gangway. The red/brown carpet was proving less serviceable than the dark brown equivalent in Ellerby's older coaches.

After entering the 80cm plug

door, there are three steps (18cm, 18cm and 21cm) up to the driver's cab/courier seat area. A further two steps of 20cm and 14cm take the passenger to the central gangway which slopes up gradually for the first four rows of seats. The uneven nature of these steps requires careful negotiation, although the chassis is equipped with suspension raise/lower facility.

The footrest-equipped Labellux reclining seats were located in

such a way as to maximise lateral space for 50 seated passengers. Although giving 28cm of leg room, the width of the gangway was reduced to 34cm. Consequently the seated passenger has adequate comfort, but movement up or down the coach requires a rather awkward sideways shuffle to avoid bruising contact with the armrests. This is particularly significant while the vehicle is in motion, making for a tedious walk to the rear toilet.

The Thetford Electra Magic toilet is accessed through an angled doorway, which gives an access width of 43cm. Once inside, the sunken cubicle is fairly spacious.

Full length luggage racks also act as conduits for individual lighting, forced air ventilation, courier call button and the loudspeaker system. Sound for either Blaupunkt PA/radio/cassette or Panasonic video is transmitted to individually-adjustable speakers located over each alternate pair of seats.

Such a system produces very even sound distribution

Costs

Total Coachwork Price	£65,100
Customs Fees	£95
Delivery Charges	£95
Fuel	£75
Certificate of Initial Fitness	£120
Total Net, Ex-works and pre-VAT	£113,460

Sample prices for replacement parts (ex VAT)

Main windscreen for Alizee SH £1,097.19

Outer Headlamp (ex. bulb) £33.95

Seatback newspaper racks £8.70

Side marker £5.25



Amongst the other essentials for long-distance operation is the hose for the on-board vehicle wash. The engine compartment is to the left of the nearside view which shows the extent of the underfloor luggage compartment.

ROAD TEST

Performance

Gear	Ratio	Max Speed	RPM
1st	9.13:1	7 mph	2400
2nd	6.41:1	13 mph	2400
3rd	3.75:1	23 mph	2400
4th	2.44:1	35 mph	2400
5th	1.71:1	49 mph	2350
6th	1.27:1	65 mph	2300
7th	1.00:1	72 mph	2000
(Speed limiter fitted)			

RPM at speeds in top gear		
30 mph	1000 rpm	
40 mph	1200 rpm	
50 mph	1500 rpm	
60 mph	1700 rpm	
70 mph	2000 rpm	

Acceleration Times

0-30 mph	15 secs
0-50 mph	30 secs
0-70 mph	55 secs
30-70 mph in top gear	30 secs
50-70 mph in top gear	20 secs

Lowest comfortable speed in top gear - 25 mph

throughout the coach. Only the one front-mounted TV video monitor is provided, but the rear mounting of the servery ensures a clear view forward for TV viewing and sightseeing.

Test Route

I modified the two day Coachmart test route to accommodate additional mileage to and from the North East.

Consequently the whole route divided neatly into four distinct sections - each of which effectively simulates different aspects of coach operation. I treated the drive to and from the test circuit as part of the test. Maintaining an average speed of about 50 mph, the 340 bhp Volvo returned 11.176 mpg over this 115 mile section.

Acting as a private hire simulation, this section tested the handling/ride qualities of the vehicle with a view to smoothness and refinement. I was impressed by the unstressed performance of the large engine. The Volvo made light work of the northern hills and immediately conveyed the impression that the 558 mile test route was going to be a pleasureable experience.

Cross-country excursion

Although the Yorkshire-Lancashire cross Pennine section was divided, I combined the results of the two parts to give a demanding test section starting on the A64 near Leeds, heading east towards York, up the 1 in 6 Garrowby Hill, over the Yorkshire Wolds to Malton, then west via A64 and A59 to the M6/M61 near Preston.



Facilities at the rear servery include intercom, fridge, 5 litre water boiler, sink, cup holders, 3 bottle coolers and storage cupboard.

Average speed dropped to 40.469 mph - reflecting the nature of the roads. I anticipated Garrowby would be a severe test, but the Volvo treated it with contempt. Ken Tague told me that even the severe inclines of Austria could be tackled with confidence.

Although for the purposes of this test the coach was unloaded, I have no reason to doubt his word. At the most difficult part of the ascent (where lesser vehicles have been forced into crawler gear), I did find it necessary to change down to third gear, but as the gradient eased it was easy to slip the EGS gear change up to fourth so that 'Girl Vicky' (as Ellerby's have christened F63 VEF) crested the brow accelerating smoothly at 30 mph.

The EGS gear change is superb, providing three essential points are remembered: (a) Always depress the clutch pedal fully to ensure activation of the microswitch which transmits the message to the gearbox. (b) Do not rush the gear change. (c) Treat the gear lever as a switch rather than a conventional change that requires force. Volvo

designed the gear lever in such a way that driver abuse will result in the knob detaching itself before any damage to the mechanism.

Mastery of the EGS system is not difficult. It feels like a cross between pneumocyclic control and the gear change on a Bedford VAL. Attached to the driver's seat the gear lever is perfectly positioned and does not restrict cab access.

I agree with Peter Ellerby who, in spite of an annoying teething problem with electrical contacts, is convinced that the EGS system is the way forward. Ellerby's plans to seal all the contacts to prevent a re-occurrence of the problem this winter.

The roads over the Yorkshire Wolds test the ride qualities of any vehicle - particularly where local highway authorities appear reluctant to accept responsibility for the surface. However, coffee (supplied courtesy of Ken Tague and the rear servery) remained unspilt, demonstrating controlled pitch and roll. There was no excessive bounce from the air suspension.

Fuel Consumption

Odometer Finish	136015 km	Fuel used	245.62 litres
Odometer Start	135117 km	(54.012 gallons)	
Total Distance	898 km (558 miles)	Average consumption	10.331 mpg

Refueling point	Fuel used	Distance Covered	MPG
A59/A1	23.62 litres	93 km	11.187
M61 (Anderton Services)	32.67 litres	126 km	10.959
M1 (Trowell Services)	42.75 litres	190 km	12.628
A1/A64	90.45 litres	264 km	8.293
A59/A1	32.72 litres	133 km	11.549
Wolsingham	23.41 litres	92 km	11.165

Test Route Analysis

Section	Distance	Fuel Consumption	Time	Ave Speed
A1/A64 to M61	160.943 miles	11.254 mpg	240 mins	40.469 mph
M61 to M1	118.066 miles	12.628 mpg	110 mins	64.773 mph
M1 to A1/A64	164.030 miles	8.293 mpg	220 mins	45.000 mph
Wolsingham to A59 and return	114.959 miles	11.176 mpg	140 mins	49.540 mph

Comparisons with recent Coachmart roadtests
Volvo B10M 340 bhp/Jonckheere - u/w 13140 kg - Overall consumption 10.8 mpg
Tiger/Plaxton (2nd hand) - u/w 12030 kg - Overall consumption 11.06 mpg
DAF SB2305 DHS/Caetano - u/w 11477 kg - Overall consumption 9.46 mpg

The 80cm continental door reveals the retractable step and access to the sunken toilet.

ROAD TEST

I tested manoeuvrability within the town of Malton. An undignified experience for such a high spec' machine, because the roads used were more appropriate to the local bingo pick-up rather than an Austrian tour feeder. Nevertheless it passed with flying colours due to the superb steering lock.

The size of the Van Hool body did become apparent on the A59 between Skipton and Clitheroe. This road becomes uncomfortably narrow when the local trucks come thundering past.

Motorway express

The B10M consumed motorway miles with considerable ease. Given the speed limiter set at 72 mph and the nature of the motorway hills, an average speed of 64.773 mph over this section was exceptional. Fuel consumption improved notably to 12.628 mpg.

Tour work

Gear changing became a feature of the test route between the M1 at Leicester Forest East and the A64 at Bramham Cross Roads. This section begins with 70 miles of slow meandering roads before heading northbound on the A1 with five sets of roadworks. The tachograph trace contrasted with the motorway section...so did fuel consumption at 8.293 mpg.

Given that half of this section resembles the drive to and from Wolsingham which returned above average consumption figures, it must be concluded that fuel consumption varies directly with the frequency of gearchanging.



The rear features angled corners and easily accessed boot. The toilet compartment reduces available space.

Verdict

The test average of 10.331 mpg compares with Ellerby's experience with the coach on fully loaded tour work. Peter Ellerby told me that the worst figure was 9.5 mpg on local work in Austria, but its average was 10-10.5 mpg.

With EGS, the B10M is a superb vehicle to drive under all conditions. The choice of seven forward gears ensures an ideal ratio to match all conditions, although it is difficult to conceive of a need for the very low first gear. During the course of the test I found that choice of the best ratio was best achieved by changing down through the box to match road speed, particularly when approaching situations such as roundabouts where the coach could be kept rolling and the wrong gear could delay progress. Ellerby's has only experienced

minor problems with this Volvo - notably with gearbox contacts, but experience with other vehicles has left them very satisfied with the service back-up. Peter Ellerby said that Volvo did respond to operators' needs and told me that previous problems with noisy differentials and radiators becoming blocked by 'Spanish Fly' were rectified promptly.

Its experience with Van Hool had been equally good, although comparison with Ellerby's older Alizee is inevitable. I have mentioned the reservations over the gangway width, but the floor level is also higher, which reduces headroom. I was also shown early signs of problems with a small number of seat cushions where the moquette was becoming creased.

Van Hool bodywork has withstood Ellerby's high-mileage operation. This particular coach looks capable of justifying faith in the manufacture. It is rattle free with hard wearing surfaces that make it perfectly matched to the work it has performed.

With Ken Tague spending 13 days out of 14 with F63 VEF it is understandable that he personalised his working environment. A wooden bead seat cover may appear unnecessary on the Isringhausen ISRI 8008 air suspended seat, but I must confirm that it is indeed comfortable! Ellerby's has specified external adornments such as multiple lights on both roof domes and along the lower side panels. The Alizee is consequently an impressive sight both day and night.

VEHICLE ASSESSMENT

Engine/Transmission

Excellent, well matched engine/gearbox. Slow change ensures smooth progress. Normal gearbox rattle when idling could be disconcerting. Air operated clutch lacks feel.

Brakes

Progressive with feel. Superb Telma linked to footbrake. Exhaust brake has little effect in 7th gear unless accelerator depressed.

Steering

Very good with some feel. Slight vibration at 40 mph (wheel balance?) Excellent lock. Adjustable steering wheel.

Roadholding

Reassuring. Benefits from good suspension and mid-engine layout.

Controls

All very convenient, particularly gearchange. Some warning lights (including indicator) obscured by steering wheel. I would prefer the accelerator to be closer to the brake pedal, but Ken Tague had no complaints.

Visibility

Very good. Two nearside mirrors gave a very good view. Offside mirror high enough to prevent blind spots. High window line behind entrance door creates crucial blind spot at junctions. Interior mirror high, but useful.

Noise

Nothing particularly obtrusive. Driver is aware of engine/gearbox/retarder operation.

Heating

Webasto pre-heater with digital timer. Thermostat controlled saloon heating with separate cab controlled Sonna Sirocco.

Ventilation

Roof vents, forced air ventilation, peage window, driver's signalling window. Fans for driver and courier.

Lighting

Five fluorescent lights in centre panel. Individual reading lights.

Luggage

Exceptional underfloor space with flat floor extended to side flaps. Rear boot area easily accessed, but reduced by sunken toilet.

Security

Key locks on all side lockers.



Signwriting for Siesta has been removed at the end of the summer season, but Ellerby's have not lost the opportunity to advertise the main features of the coach on the rear window.



Coachmart's Rod Davey evaluates Yorkshire Rider's Bus Express Transit (BEST) system - and finds that a bus-based flexible approach to LRT is what is required.

OPTIMAL TRACKING: RIDER LEADS THE WAY

A bus that can run on road or track would seem to be the answer to today's congested city streets.

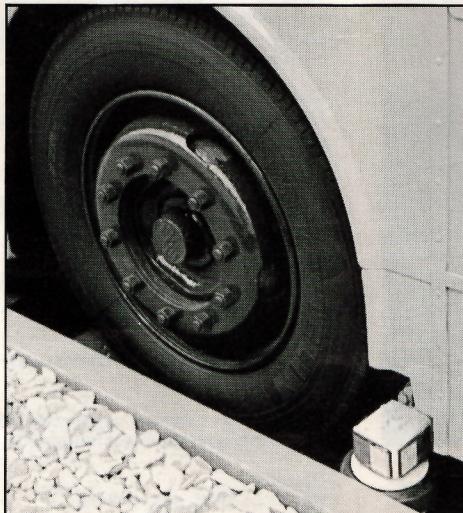
Such buses are already running successfully abroad and now they look set to hit Britain. Staff writer Rod Davey tested the Bus Express Transit system at a test site in Yorkshire.

BUS Express Transit (BEST) is a bus-based rapid transit system which I 'test drove' on its demonstration track at Yorkshire Rider's Bramley Garage in Leeds.

The prototype vehicle is a Metrobus double-decker which is fitted with small rubber-tyred guide wheels mounted in the front wheel arches. With a push fit rather than a tolerance, these guide the bus in between 'kerbs' either side of the track. As a driver, one need not worry about steering the vehicle, as all that it needed is foot pressure on the gas pedal.

Ask Dr Bob Tebb, Yorkshire Rider's development manager, and he will tell you that BEST is, while not carrying the full force of its acronym, at least complimentary to any proposed fully segregated light transit system.

It is Leeds' answer to both the problem of congestion and the



BEST's guide wheels run between parallel 'kerbs' and require a push fit rather than a tolerance - ensuring an even smoother ride for passengers.

rapid transit of passengers on public transport. However, the fully segregated but more expensive Leeds Advanced Transit System (LATS), which is based on the Briway system developed by helicopter entrepreneur Alan Bristow, appears to have priority with the city's political masters.

Tebb told me: 'In any big city there is a need for a variety of modes, as all are affected by time and physical circumstances', and he conceded: 'There is a role for segregated rapid transit on some transport corridors'.

However, he emphasised his and Yorkshire Rider's commitment to BEST by saying: 'We must never forget there will always be a significant role for the bus because of its accessibility, and its ability to penetrate housing estates and city centre areas.'

Leeds City Council needs a parliamentary Bill for the Briway

DEVELOPMENT

scheme to go ahead - but local opposition has meant that original proposals for an elevated trackway have given way to even more expensive ideas for a city centre underground system. And to have the remotest chance of success, LATS has to secure the support of the local Tory opposition as cross-party support in Parliament is crucial. At the time of writing chances of support look pretty slim and it is thought BEST will eventually become the priority scheme.

The key advantages of the BEST scheme include the ease, speed and lower costs of introduction. Tebb said: 'Buses worth £80 million already exist and the infrastructure can be built without the need for Parliamentary powers. A few yards of busway track situated at critical congestion points can benefit the entire route.'

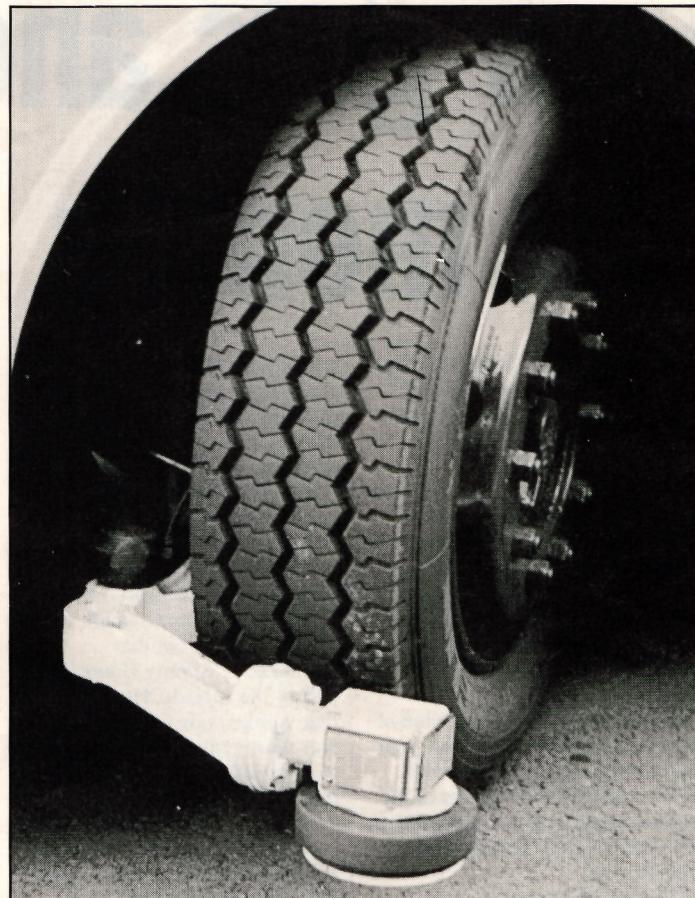
Although the cost per mile of busway track is very similar to the infrastructural costs of light railway schemes, the system's flexibility means that only 10 to 25 per cent of the route would have to be tracked to achieve optimal effectiveness.

Moreover, Tebb spoke of more powerful advantages intrinsic to the BEST scheme. He said: 'There is no need for interchanges as the bus is both the line-haul mode and its own feeder - giving everybody a through journey'.

Tebb cited the system in Adelaide, Australia, saying that whereas LRT (Light Rapid Transit) restricted through journeys to only 17 per cent of passengers with the rest changing, the bus-based system transported 83 per cent on uninterrupted through journeys between home and workplace. He added: 'It is hardly surprising that patronage on busway routes have risen 50 percent ahead of those routes outside the system.' Such increases make minibus passenger generation small beer by comparison'.

The guided busway notion does have its problems and detractors, however. The negative image of the bus is a particular problem in this respect. Other busway operators had bought 'sleek articulated and rigid vehicles with high quality seating, and a high performance, to work busway tracks.' He told me: 'It is necessary to evolve from conventional buses into attractive and sleek single-deckers with a high level of interior trim'.

However, it is one of the advantages that the system may be launched with conventional buses



The bus is fitted with small rubber-tired guide wheels mounted in the front wheel arch.

- but such anomalies may be cost-effectively remedied with the company's fleet replacement programme. The whole thing looks more attractive if one imagines the type of vehicles which may be used for replacement - and in Yorkshire Rider's case this means the stylish Optare Delta.

Bus-based transit systems would work well in the deregulated environment. For example, as cities expand with rapid redevelopment, the BEST busway track will be generally located close to the city centre - meaning concentrated, efficient and fast bus flows irrespective of the evolving suburban route network.

The key features for this are an optimum mix of ordinary 'on-street' buses operated on segmented guided bus tracks, combined with bus lane priority schemes and priorities at junctions. Furthermore, such a strategy should be accompanied with, in Tebb's words: 'A strong unique identity'.

Towards this end, Yorkshire Rider has bought five Optare Deltas, which Tebb describes as 'the first phase of a commitment

to improving the image, comfort and attractiveness of passenger transport.' This has been accompanied with talks with DAF Bus to integrally build the guided bus engineering into the chassis specification.

Moreover, it is quite possible

the BEST system could be fully guided in the future. An example of this is the fully-guided trackway Mercedes Benz demonstrates in Rastatt in Southern Germany. Here we have double-ended and double-articulated electrified buses which are dedicated to fixed track use.

Despite all this, it would appear Leeds city fathers remain relatively unimpressed - preferring the non-flexible alternative. Apparently they favour 'a system which takes traffic off the roads', according to a Labour Group spokesman. But the Busway, at strategic points within the city's infrastructure, does exactly that.

Moreover, Labour Council leader Jon Trickett may have a difficult job if he finds Parliamentary support is not forthcoming for its 'Metropolis' vision to solve Leeds' future transport needs.

In summary, BEST offers a rapid transit system which provides retained through-trips for bus passengers, with faster journeys and less obstruction for other road users. Such a scheme would also generate highway improvements of benefit to all road users, with the additional benefits of low capital investment and operating costs. Furthermore, the scheme is regarded as environmentally sound and has flexibility for both urban growth and developing patterns of travel.

Most importantly, the scheme has the prospect of being capable of rapid implementation - and prepares the infrastructural way for a segregated conventional LRT system in the future. ■



Pictured here is Yorkshire Rider's experimental track to demonstrate to press, public and politicians what is involved.

Ridge car gets another six months

THE two vehicle licence held by Ridge Car Ltd, trading as Lovitts Coaches, of Scarborough, has been renewed for a further six months and not the four asked for, at a Leeds public inquiry before the North Eastern Deputy Traffic Commissioner, Mr Brian Horner.

In March the Traffic Commissioner, Mr Frederick Whalley, cut the duration of Ridge Car's licence so that it only had six months to run, refused its application to increase the authorisation from two to four vehicles, cancelled the registration of a Bridlington town service, and banned the company from registering any further local services. (*Coachmart*, March 30).

At the start of the proceedings, Mr Horner said he would in particular be considering the company's repute and financial standing. He would want explanations for shortcomings in vehicle maintenance, why managing director Mr Geoffrey Lovitt refused to allow a vehicle examiner to examine vehicles in July, and why vehicles were not being kept at the authorised operating centre.

Mr Lovitt said the company currently had four vehicles in possession, two 20 seaters, a 16 seater and a 51 seater. They provided a number of services for the community, including rural services.

They had great difficulty in acquiring an operating base. They lost their original operating centre in Filey after the owners decided to sell, being given two weeks notice to get out. Exhaustive inquiries had been made to locate new premises.

They were given temporary permission to use Cliff Farm, Filey, where they were based at the time of the last inquiry. In August the Rural Development Commission put them in touch with a farmer at Lissett, who offered the company the base it had now.

They were also in the process of negotiating a lease with British Rail for the use of land adjacent to

Filey railway station, and they had permission to park two or three vehicles at the railway station in the meantime, to assist the company to run its services.

The vehicles that were parked at the railway station returned to Lissett for routine servicing. It was more convenient to keep the stage carriage vehicles at the railway station. The first service journey left Filey at 0715 hours and the last bus into Filey was at 2330 hours.

The company had possession of the Lissett premises on a five year renewable lease, said Mr Lovitt. He was awaiting the results of the present inquiry before going ahead with the planned development of the premises.

Regular maintenance inspections were currently contracted out to a commercial garage and the company carried out weekly safety checks and minor repairs itself. The smaller vehicles could be parked under cover at Lissett, but the 51 seater was too large to go into the maintenance bay, where they were digging out an inspection pit. They proposed putting a ramp outside for the 51 seater.

In reply to Mr Horner, Mr Lovitt said the 51 seater was used for private hire. He agreed that it was not adapted for one man operation, but admitted that it had twice been used on one man services in an emergency. He said he now realised it should not be so used.

Mr Lovitt said since the last inquiry, four vehicles had been re-certified, one of which was subsequently sold. Roughly £3,700 had been spent on maintenance this year. The vehicles, which were 'G', 'F' and 'L' registered, were about 20 years old.

Mr Horner commented that it was not the age of the vehicles, or the amount of money spent, that was important but the quality of the maintenance.

Mr Lovitt agreed that there were no formal maintenance arrangements at Lissett at the

present. He said the vehicles were checked by himself and the traffic manager, Mr Bob Davies. Neither of them were skilled, but could be regarded as semi-skilled.

The Filey Town service was a commercial service, but the Scarborough/Bridlington via Filey, and the Scarborough/Humanby services were subsidised by North Yorkshire County Council. He had only just found out that Humberside County Council paid part of the subsidy. He maintained that Humberside County Council was wrong in saying he had failed to notify the county of service alterations.

After Mr Horner said there had clearly been a misunderstanding, Mr Lovitt said he was now quite clear about his obligations in relation to tendered services.

In reply to Mr Horner, Mr Lovitt said it was the intention to update the vehicles as soon as funds were available. He had spent a considerable amount of money since starting the business up, and they had now got the vehicles to the stage where they were as good as any modern vehicles mechanically.

They had lost hardly any mileage at all in the last three months. He was satisfied that they could meet the drivers' hours requirements. He agreed that they had some problems in that direction, but they had all been sorted out.

Ninety eight per cent of the private hire work undertaken was evening work. They were asking for two additional licence discs because they were being offered work they did not have the discs to undertake. All the vehicles except one 20 seater, kept exclusively on stage carriage work, were equipped with tachographs. The vehicles at Filey went into Lissett at least once a week for safety checks and cleaning.

Vehicle examiner Mr Alan Dyson said in July a maintenance investigation was curtailed due to Mr Lovitt's actions. A vehicle given an immediate prohibition for a badly corroded brake pipe in

licensing & legal

WEEKLY REPORT ON LAW AND THE COACH OPERATOR

By Michael Jewell

July, received another immediate prohibition in September.

A second vehicle examined in September, a recently acquired Ford Transit, was also defective but the defects were rectified on the spot. A vehicle presented for annual test in September was seriously defective. That vehicle was presented on three occasions before being found to be satisfactory.

He was told that weekly checks were carried out in the car park of St Mary's Church or alternatively use was made of the facilities of a Mr Locker. However, Mr Locker said his facilities had only ever been used once. From the records produced, the frequency of inspection was not within the stated limits.

A statement was read from the test station manager, who said an appointment had been made for two vehicles to be brought into the test station in July as part of a fleet inspection. During the examination of the first vehicle, Mr Dyson pointed out that bus seats had been installed without notification, that they were not properly secure, and that a tyre was defective.

At that point, Mr Lovitt "blew up" and said he was leaving. Mr Dyson, who was inspecting the gearbox assembly, had to beat a hasty retreat when the engine was

LICENSING & LEGAL

started up, and the door was quickly opened to prevent any danger as Mr Lovitt drove away. The second vehicle was not inspected.

Mr Lovitt subsequently wrote to say he considered that Mr Dyson was unreasonable and that he would not allow him to inspect any more of the company's vehicles.

A statement from a second vehicle examiner was read, in which he said he was instructed to inspect the first vehicle the following day. Mr Lovitt became agitated and said he would have to do a full inspection and issue a test certificate. When he inspected the vehicle, he found the same defects noted by Mr Dyson.

Following argument over a clutch pedal that was said to be insecure, Mr Horner said whatever the semantics, it had not been to the manufacturer's specifications and was quite frankly a "bodge".

Questioned by Mr Horner, Mr Dyson said he was not totally convinced the commercial garage was doing all the inspections. The prohibitions had subsequently all been cleared and he was not aware of any problems since. The defects found were safety critical items

which could have resulted in serious accidents.

Mr Lovitt said he had never been opposed to vehicle examiners inspecting the company's vehicles unless, as in this particular case, he was treated as an idiot. The inspection was as if the vehicle had been a brand new vehicle. The vehicles he operated were 20 years old and were in a good mechanical condition, and not as said by Mr Dyson.

After Mr Horner commented that two vehicle examiners had said the vehicles were seriously defective, Mr Lovitt said that was a matter of opinion. He had been asked for his qualifications, but the vehicle examiners had not been asked for theirs. Statements had been made that were entirely untrue and in some instances the evidence given had been total lies.

In reply to Mr Horner, Mr Lovitt said the six weekly inspections were being done by the commercial garage, and always had been ever since the contract was entered into. He agreed that he had quite a lot of help from the Department and the company's future depended upon co-operation. He said he was prepared to accept advice from the

vehicle examiners.

He had spent the last 18 months trying to build a business and provide a service to the public which for a number of years had been non-existent. He had operated the business successfully for the public, and they were at the stage that if it were lost the public would be "screaming blue murder", as they relied entirely upon the company's service.

If the vehicle maintenance was as bad as was being suggested, they would not have been able to operate that service seven days a week with only one journey missed since January. He agreed that to carry out its obligations, the company had to work with the authorities.

Mr Horner said he understood the sentiments expressed, but he had to be satisfied that the company was going to operate reliably. It might well have been that there was some misunderstanding. The company had been struggling with old vehicles and struggling to provide a service.

Mr Davies said the previous public inquiry had followed complaints from a former employee, who felt that he'd had a

rough deal. Since then, sterling efforts had been made to improve the fleet. Many complaints had been made to the Traffic Area Office, but they mainly originated from one source.

Servicing and safety checks were now being carried out regularly and the financial base had been strengthened.

Mr Horner said although he had some doubts, he was prepared to accept the company had retained its repute. He had examined the last set of accounts, and was satisfied that though the company's financial standing was not strong, it met the requirement as to financial standing.

He was also satisfied that apart from one or two freely admitted exceptions, the local services had been operated as registered. The missing mileage was not such that it required him to take any action.

The company had been struggling to survive with old vehicles and a lack of proper operating centre facilities. He had every confidence in the vehicle examiners, and he felt that the tension and problems had been caused by Mr Lovitt's anxiety to keep the company's vehicles on the road and operate its services

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satisfactorily.

Maintenance had been unsatisfactory, but he was pleased to note that steps had been taken to rationalise the arrangements. However, it was clear that the present operating base was unsatisfactory for any regular maintenance to be carried out there, and that it required considerable investment before it would be satisfactory. It might be better if that money was spent on the maintenance of the vehicles.

The way forward was to build on the improvements made. The railway station situation needed tightening up through a variation application for an additional operating centre.

Mr Horner said he had not considered complaints about the use of vehicles without tachographs from Mr Thacker, as there was prima facie evidence from the traffic examiner that the vehicles concerned were equipped with tachographs.

He was making a limited grant because he was very concerned about the financial status of the company, said Mr Horner. He would want a set of updated accounts at the end of six months, and there would be a further full fleet inspection during that period to ensure that the undertakings given and the promised improvements were established as a fact.

He warned that he was giving the company a final chance, saying that it had six months in which to show that his confidence was not misplaced.

Bus war warning

THE West Midland Traffic Commissioner, Mr John Mervyn Pugh, warned of the consequences that would follow if a bus war broke out, when he granted an application for a new PSV operator's licence by Mr Michael Elkins, a former partner in Redline Bus Co, of Bromsgrove.

Mr Elkins, trading as Kingfisher Bus & Coach Co, of 6 Ansley Close, Matchborough East, Redditch, had applied for a licence authorising the operation of one single decker and seven double deckers.

In May 1988, Redline Bus and Midland Red (West) Ltd were severely warned by the then Deputy Traffic Commissioner, the

late Mr Ronald Jackson, after a "bus war" during which it was alleged that a driver was beaten senseless and buses were reversed into each other.

Redline had been formed by Mr Elkins, and Mr Stanley Pemberton, both former Midland Red inspectors, to compete with their former employers. (*Coachmart*, May 13, 1988.)

Mr Mervyn Pugh made it clear that he could not involve himself in any dispute between the former partners. However, he said he would be concerned if Mr Pemberton was also granted a licence in his own right, and a "bus war" broke out.

Mr Elkins said the atmosphere

between the operators had been much improved since he had been operating on his own. As far as maintenance was concerned, there had been no previous problems.

Mr Mervyn Pugh said it was up to Mr Elkins to look to the quality of his own service, and not worry about what other operators were doing. His drivers had to get on with their own operations, rather than trying to monitor what others were doing.

After Mr Elkins had agreed to write a letter to his drivers, pointing out their responsibilities, Mr Mervyn Pugh said he found the proposed period of three weeks between inspections to be acceptable.

licensing & legal

WEEKLY REPORT ON LAW AND THE COACH OPERATOR

By Michael Jewell

Scott cabs director is fined £350

THE misuse of a minibus has led to Mr Terence Daly, a director of Scott Cabs Ltd, being ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £350, by Scunthorpe Magistrates.

At an earlier hearing, the company, of Ashby, Scunthorpe, was ordered to pay £2,850 in fines and costs, after being convicted in its absence of offences of aiding and abetting a driver to drive a public service vehicle when not the holder of a PSV driving licence, and of using vehicles when a higher rate of vehicle excise duty was payable, without insurance, without a PSV operator's licence, without test certificates, and without Certificates of Initial Fitness. (*Coachmart*, September 21).

Another director, Mr James Ramage, was subsequently cleared of any involvement. (*Coachmart*, October 5).

Mr Daly, of 18 Charterhouse Drive, Bottesford, Scunthorpe, pleaded guilty to driving a minibus when not the holder of a PSV driving licence in December 1988, and to using it without a PSV operator's licence, without insurance, without a test certificate, without a Certificate of Initial Fitness, and when a higher rate of vehicle excise duty was payable.

Prosecuting for the North Eastern Traffic Area, Mr Stephen Baggott said the minibus had been observed by a traffic examiner carrying children to a school in Hull. It was followed to the Humber Bridge, where the traffic

examiner approached the driver, Mr Daly, when it stopped at the toll booth.

The minibus was obviously a hired vehicle. It was equipped with 14 seats and Mr Daly was not wearing a PSV driving licence badge. Mr Daly claimed he was a part time employee of the company and that he had received instructions from the company's manager, but subsequent inquiries revealed that he was a director.

He said he had held a PSV licence about 20 years ago, that he was a citizen of the United States, and that he was only temporarily in this country. When asked who was paying him, Mr Daly said that he was doing it as a favour.

Inquiries revealed that Scott Cabs was being paid £2.63 per day to take the children to the school, having received a total of £2,522.80 over two terms. The minibus had been hired from K W Sadler, who had pointed out that it could not be used for hire or reward.

Mr Baggott said the minibus had been being used as a public service vehicle. It fell within the definition of such vehicles, contained in the 1981 Act, namely vehicles constructed or adapted for the carriage of eight or more passengers and the passengers carried for hire or reward.

However, it was not up to PSV standards, not having many of the safety requirements. It was more in the nature of a works bus. The insurance policy did not cover its use for hire or reward.

Defending, Mr John Roberts

said Mr Daly had been induced by Mr James Ramage, and his brother Samuel, to believe certain facts concerning the business of Scott Cabs which he later discovered to be false.

He had come back from the United States with the intention of investing in what was a family business. He was told that everything was all right. When he looked into matters, he found that was not so, but by then it was too late and he now found himself before the court.

Mr Daly said he had been led to believe that the company was "up and running" and that a licence was in situ. He had not known that the minibus was not insured for the school run to Hull.

Questioned by Mr Baggott, Mr Daly agreed that he had signed the hiring agreement for the vehicle.

The magistrates fined Mr Daly £150 for using the vehicle without insurance, £50 for using it without a PSV operator's licence, and £50 for using it without a Certificate of Initial Fitness.

They gave him an absolute discharge in relation to each of the other offences, endorsed his driving licence with four penalty points, and ordered him to pay £100 towards the costs of the prosecution.

Mr Baggott indicated that charges alleging a series of offences by Mr Samuel Ramage, relating to the operation of the same vehicle, and a different minibus a month earlier, were being withdrawn. ■

Fame? Not really!

SIR

Imagine my surprise when reading "Coachmart" (September 14) to find myself mentioned in it. Fame at last perhaps? No.

Reading an article in Licensing & Legal and the revoking of Five Star Travel of Penketh (Mr. R. S. L. Carter) operators licence it gives the impression I was the Transport Manager for the first few months of this company's operation.

Whilst I fully understand why this has happened, no fault of "Coachmarts", I would like to correct this false impression.

Before the company started trading I was offered employment and did accept this offer, but when the company started, the bus went without me (like a lot of others). The offer never became reality, so I was never employed by them.

I have contacted the Traffic Commissioners to clear my name (Mills not Miles by the way) and would be grateful if you could publish this letter.

P.E. MILLS
Warrington

Why we must all work together

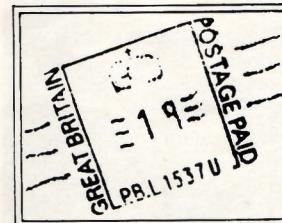
SIR

I refer to your article 'Driver and Guides: Let's Live in Harmony' 21 September. Whilst there are a number of points I could take issue with, this would undoubtedly be as tedious as the article itself and would do nothing to encourage and promote an atmosphere of harmony between our two professions.

Firstly, let me freely admit that, as in all walks of life, there are those who perform their jobs better than others. This applies to drivers, tour and coach operators and yes - guides. However, it does not benefit our industry to publicly criticise when there are professional associations and trade organisations who can and do take further action if their members are found guilty of professional misconduct.

In February this year, some 80 Registered Guides formed the Association of Professional Tourist Guides (APTG) an independent section of MSF. This association now has a membership of 200 and has drawn up a Code of Conduct which members are required to agree and adhere to.

This high standard of professionalism can only serve to



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enhance the tourism industry as a whole. We are at present compiling an APTG Year Book to be distributed to both tour and coach operators at our stand at the world Travel Market. As well as contact names and addresses it will have useful information for the trade and the 1990/91 freelance guiding fees.

As guides we feel that we are doing our best to raise the standard of guiding, so please let us dispense with this call for a 'Panoramic Endorsement' and let us hear no more of "Guides don't have PSV licences" (actually some do) and "Drivers can easily move into the left hand seat". A Panoramic Tour is actually very hard work and Registered Guides have a fund of knowledge that they can and do call upon during a tour of this kind, never more so than when showing the British traveller his own capital city.

Guiding in London is not just from a coach but as Ms Baker knows very well regularly incorporates interior visits in Westminster Abbey, St Paul's, British Museum and other galleries or is she suggesting that drivers can undertake this too?

The LTB Guide course involves six months of intensive study and the standard of this training is so highly revered that tutors from this course are regularly consulted by other Regional Tourist Boards and from as far afield as Hong Kong and Fiji. It would profit us all if we recognised and sang each others praises so that we not only learn to live in harmony but to work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

MARILYN WHENSLEY
Chairman
Association of Professional
Tourist Guides

Well done, Marksman

SIR

Marksman's comments regarding the quality of bus and coach stations raise a number of very important points.

National Express services use a wide range of terminals throughout England, Scotland and Wales of which only four are actually owned by ourselves. As a result, customers are likely to receive differing levels of services at each one.

Both Marksman and the readers of Coachmart will

be pleased to learn therefore, that the total re-building of the booking office at Birmingham, Digbeth is currently under way and that plans are also in hand to improve the toilet facilities and the general waiting area.

Birmingham, Digbeth may never be a perfect coach station, but we are indeed ever conscious of the need to ensure that we offer the best service we can to all our customers.

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SIR

Marksman has done the industry a service in revealing the menace of the neglect comment on a prohibition order. I am very concerned, too to hear of a traffic commissioner not having examiners at public enquiries when their reports are the basis of action against operators.

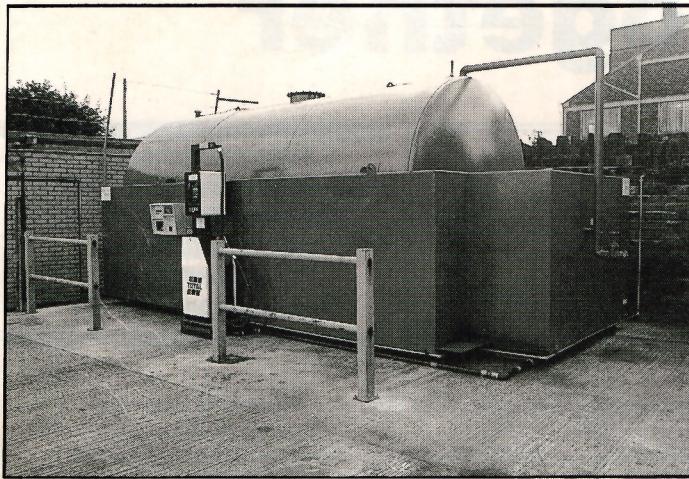
It is essential that the B.C.C. should take action in this matter. Time after time in my long career I have seen reports which, superficially, have given an alarming view of the way an operator conducts his business yet on close analysis most of the faults listed have little or no

bearing on the safety of the vehicle and could have occurred to the most scrupulous of operators.

As far back as the '60s, when operator licensing was introduced for hauliers, I suggested that, when an operator's licence was at stake, the commissioner dealing with the case should have with him an independent qualified motor engineer as assessor. Traffic commissioners are not chosen on the basis of their mechanical knowledge and it is wrong that a person's livelihood can be taken away so easily.

C.S. DUNBAR
Malvern.

System's dual benefits



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• The alternative to anti-wax derv may well be Lucas Automotive's CAV D-WAX fuel heaters, particularly since Lucas announced a 20 percent discount. Completely maintenance free and

easy to fit, the units are ideal also where the availability of anti-wax derv is in doubt. The units are available from most Lucas outlets.

New Voith due soon

VOITH has hinted at two new automatic gearboxes at the end of next year, to cope with demand for minibuses and high-powered coaches.

At present, vehicles from 150 hp to over 200 hp are catered for, but the new gearboxes should cope with current 350-plus engines and shuttle buses. The only hold-up at present is reliability of new control boxes, which will eventually match the 2 in 10,000 reliability record of the current equipment.

• A Voith automatic gearbox installed in an MCW Metrobus operated by Go-Ahead Northern has clocked up 422,000 miles without mishap. The D851 gearbox, used in city conditions, has seen ten years' service.

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tank can be monitored and can even be sold with an additional Weights and Measures approved card reader system. The only on-site essentials are power supply and a telephone point. Autovend is at 41 Business Park, Wakefield WF2 0XJ.

Booster for winter

OLDHAM'S battery booster socket is likely to be popular as the onset of winter leads to the usual problems with discharged and weakened batteries. Designed in cast aluminium and permanently bolted to the vehicle at an easy access point, it makes a maintenance-free way of attaching a booster. It is available from all Oldham Crompton outlets.



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WITH a price tag of at least £995, the Morpak range of pressure washers is aimed at the serious buyer... and it has some serious specifications! The pressure washers operate at up to 2,200 psi, and up to 130 degs

C. Output is up to 12 l/min. The units are capable of removing road film, and of cleaning engines. Details of the washers are from Tina Newman, Morpak, Kings Road, Charfleets Industrial Estate, Canvey Island, Essex, Tel: 0865

Manual for Tacographs

A MANUAL which sets out the regulations and use of tachographs has been revised to accommodate the latest directives.

David Lowe's The Tachograph Manual has been popular since its publication in 1981. It covers the fitting and use of tachographs, chart analysis, tacho economics, the law and regulations. The book is £20, and should be available from bookshops, or direct from the publisher Koagn Page Ltd, Tel: 01 278 0433

Quiet stuff

NOISE control engineering firm Salex has developed a new range of acoustic materials to cope with the predicted standards of the 1990s. A purpose-built plant costing £100,000 will produce the foams and composites, many of which are fire resistant. For further details, contact Salex at Eastgates, Colchester, tel: 0206 866911.

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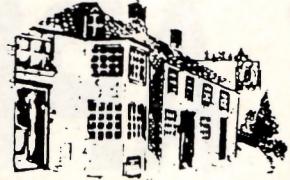
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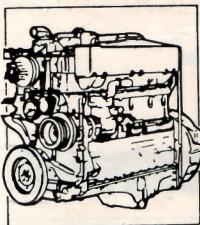


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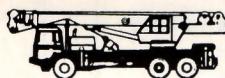
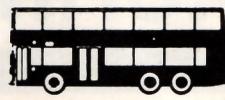
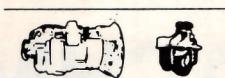


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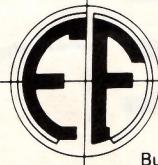
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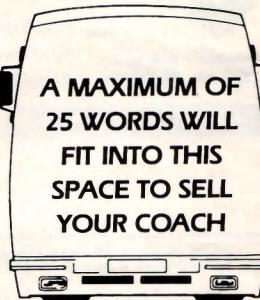
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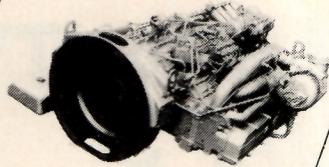
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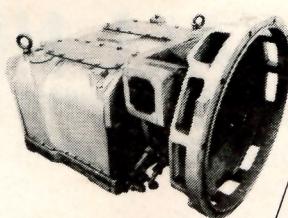
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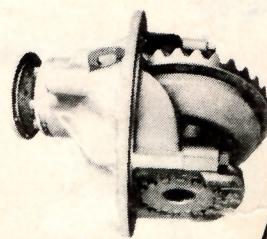
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1984 BOVA EUROPA III, 49 reclining seats, toilet, TV/video equipment, Webasto, Nomad drinks machine, carpets, curtains, courier seat, radio, PA, tape, plug door.

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1983 FORD PLAXTON 3200, 53 seats, radio PA and tape, video, curtains, power door, soft trim.

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1988 E SB-DHS VAN HOOL ALIZEE LOW DRIVER	51R + TOILET
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1987 D MB230 DUPLE 320 SL	57R
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1987 D SB-DHS PLAXTON 3500**	53R
1987 D MB230 DUPLE 340	53R
1986 D SB-DHTD PARAMOUNT 3200 LOW DRIVER	55'E' TYPE
1986 D SB DHS CAETANO ALGARVE	49R + TOILET
1986 C MB 200 CAETANO ALGARVE	49R + TOILET
1986 C MB 200 LAG GALAXY	49/53R + TOILET
1986 C MB 200 CARIBBEAN 11	49R + TOILET
1984 B SB-DHS JONCKHEERE P50	51R + TOILET
1984 MB 200 VAN HOOL ALIZEE	51R + TOILET
1984 A MB 200 CAETANO ALGARVE	48/53R + TOILET
1981 W MB 200 PLAXTON SUPREME IV	53R

VOLVO

1987 D B10M PARAMOUNT 3500***	49/53R + TOILET
1982 X B58 DUPLE DOM IV	53R

AEC

1979 T 760 DUPLE DOMINANT II	53
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BOVA

1985 C FUTURA HI-LINE EXEC	49R + TOILET + AIR CONDITIONING
1983 BOVA EUROPA	53R

LEYLAND

1984 B TIGER PLAXTON 3200	53E
1982 X TIGER PLAXTON SUPREME V EXPRESS	53
1982 X LEOPARD ZF DOMINANT IV	57
1981 W LEOPARD ZF PLAXTON SUPREME IV	48R + 5

BEDFORD

1981 W YMT DOMINANT 11	53
1980 V PJK PLAXTON SUPREME	29
1975 N YRQ PLAXTON	45

FORD

1981 W R1114 DUPLE DOMINANT III	53
1980 W R1114 PLAXTON SUPREME IV	53

BRISTOL

1978 S LHS PLAXTON SUPREME	35
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